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IN CHRISTO:
A MEMOIR
OF
SAMUEL BLOTT.





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IN CHRISTO.



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IN CHRISTO.



IN CHRISTO:

A Memoir

OF THE LATE

SAMUEL BLOTT

OF BASSINGBOURNE.

BY HIS DAUGHTER,

JULIA S. BLOTT,

AUTHORESS OF "A MAY GARLAND," ETC.

WITH A PREFACE, BY

EMMA JANE WORBOISE,

AUTHORESS OF "THORNEYCROFT HALL," ETC.

LONDON:

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DEDICATION.



THIS BRIEF MEMOIR IS REVERENTLY INSCRIBED,
“IN MEMORIAM” OF A BELOVED FATHER,
WITH THE AFFECTIONS OF HIS BEREAVED DAUGHTER,

THE AUTHORESS.

Linden Hall.

September 1865.

**"I do believe that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom 't was given,
The bliss that mixes man with heaven.**

**"That rowing hard against the stream,
Saw distant gales of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream.**

**"That did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forbore and did not tire,
Like Stephen an unquenched fire."**

Tennyson.

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THE BROTHERS DALZIEL.

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PREFACE.



THE value of biographical writings always has been, and I suppose always will be, very variously estimated. In the present day we have biographies supplied by a literally teeming press, of every possible character and shade of character, and every peculiar tinge and tendency. We have biographies of literary and scientific men; of men of travel and of adventure; of men who have risen to affluence and eminence from the lowest rung of the ladder of position; biographies of

statesmen and warriors, leaders of fashion, and divines; and—but far more sparingly than half or a quarter of a century ago—biographies of private individuals, remarkable only for their Christian profession and practice!

Happily the old school of religious memoirs has very nearly died out; a school which did not hesitate to give to the world the most private records of a good man's heart-experiences, which he never expected would meet the eye of any human creature; a type of memorial which shrinks not from ransacking letters and journals, and publishing family secrets, which all sense of honour, good taste, and reverence for the dead, ought to render sacred and inviolate!

Much is chronicled that might very profitably be omitted. There is a sort of register of birth, and perhaps of baptism, a period of conviction of longer or shorter duration, and,

of course, a period of conversion ; a series of letters, which the unfortunate defunct writer would surely never have penned, had he dreamed of the use his friends (?) would one day make of them : many pages of a private journal, for the most part extremely prosaic in its details, and uninteresting in its sameness and egotism, &c., &c. ; and lastly, a happy death, and perhaps the text of his funeral sermon. And having carefully read one of these books, you have to all intents and purposes read them all ; you have a specimen of the whole series, and know pretty well what you may expect, when you take up the new memoir, "just published," fresh from the shelves of your bookseller, or your select library.

That such works have not been productive of good, it would be vain and untrue to affirm ; but they are scarcely applicable to the needs of the present day, or there

is something in their tone very much at variance with the spirit and energy of religious life in this latter half of the nineteenth century. Neither would I for one moment deny, or appear to deny, that the true and simple record of the life of a Christian man or woman has a permanent, and very decided value. Christian biography, in itself, is a thing of import and worth, and may teach many a lesson of consistency and patience, cheer many a drooping spirit, and rouse many a laggard in the race, who has not yet started for the goal. It is a part of our literature which cannot and should not be ignored by any. The mischief lies not in biography, taken in its abstract sense, but in the carelessness, or one-sidedness, or bad taste of the *biographer*, who exposes the private details and, perhaps, the inane, but harmless gossip, of that which never was intended to meet the public gaze and criticism.

This serious fault, this tremendous mistake, Miss Blott has very wisely avoided. Her memoir, "*In Christo*," contains many vivid reminiscences, and many graphic touches of character, which abundantly demonstrate what manner of man, in his moral and Christian experiences, was the father whom she so justly loved, admired, and revered. She gives no diary; and herein she has evinced good taste, and the just decorum which a daughter should be the last to overstep, in circumstances so pathetic, so solemn, and so delicate. She has compiled her memoirs chiefly from the papers left by her departed parent; but she has not in any degree violated the sacred repose, in which the *innermost* life of a *good* man should ever remain. Generally, she allows his actions to speak for themselves, and to elucidate the spring from whence flowed the rare excellence and consistency of his Christian character.

But why, it may be asked, write this memoir at all? Samuel Blott was a man unknown to fame: his own circle knew and loved him, and will long hold his memory dear: but except on his own peculiar stage of action, he was neither honoured in life, or lamented in death; simply because he lived and died in comparative obscurity. Why then bring before the world, the annals of so quiet a life? Because there are thousands of people in the like position; thousands struggling as he struggled, rising as he rose, succeeding as he succeeded, to whom his example must be cheering, stimulating, and may under God's blessing prove serviceable for this life, as well as for that which is to come.

He was a man truly remarkable—owing nothing to fortune, or birth, and very little to early education, though he had the unspeakable advantage of a pious mother—a woman who, though in humble life, possessed

great ability and force of character. Vigour of purpose, untiring industry, and deep-seated Christian principle, carried into the commonest actions of daily life, were the secret and all-powerful sources of his success in every point of view.

Finally—he thought that the truthful, unvarnished record of the main facts of a life like his, might be useful; and *usefulness* was the great aim of his existence.

To his eldest daughter, he confided the task of preparing for the public such a memoir, as might, he trusted, under God's blessing, be the instrument of good to many whose trials, temptations, and general circumstances might more or less resemble his own.

To attempt to give any analysis of the character of Mr. Blott, in a preface, would be alike useless and unfair; an injustice to his biographer, whose reverent love and filial piety have given to the world these simple,

but touching memorials, which might otherwise have been shrouded in perpetual obscurity.

EMMA JANE WORBOISE.

CHILDHOOD AND PARENTAGE.



"'Twas a green and easy world
As he took it, room to play
(Though one's hair might get uncurled
At the far end of the day).
If reproved by God, or you,
'Twas to better him, he knew ;
And, if crossed, he gathered still,
'Twas to cross out something ill."

BROWNING, slightly altered.

"Ye seem but as a fable,
Oh, days that are gone by !
The Bible old, with clasps of gold—
The young believing eye—
The loved and loving parents,
The childhood blithe and gay—
The calm content so innocent—
All, all, are passed away !"

From the German.

CHAPTER I.



IN the little village of Bassingbourne, Cambridgeshire, in a small cottage, fronting the once broad and fair domains of the noble defender of Wycliffe—the illustrious Plantagenet, John of Gaunt—my dear father, Samuel Blott, was born, on the 17th day of September, 1808.

I have heard from his old playmates, that he was a remarkably handsome youth, of very prepossessing appearance; tall and gracefully agile in all manly sports, and of an open cast of countenance, of the good-humoured ingenuous Saxon type, which seems to speak for itself concerning the frankness and sincerity and fearless character of its possessor. He had a

rosy complexion ; auburn hair, golden-tinted ; large soft blue eyes, very sweet, most thoughtfully expressive ; and a mouth of mild benignity, mostly wreathed with tranquil smiles, or in moments of graver reflection, set in happy quiet curves, that seemed to my mind ever indicative of musings on the hidden and inner peace, which passeth all understanding. His face, when in repose, wore that look of perfect calm and rest that you sometimes see so beautifully portrayed in the sacred paintings of the old masters ;—the look that seems to pass beyond the sunset of time, to the dawn of a more glorious day ;—the aspect settled and sweetly grave of one who fixes his earnest gaze on the end of the course : content to see

. . . . "an ecstasy
Beyond a foretold agony !"

The look of one whose heart is brave, whose nature is tender and deep, whose soul is anchored on the Rock of Ages.

Perhaps some' changes passed over my father's outer man, as years glided away :—perhaps the fair face and the sunny hair really appertained only to the days of youth. Certainly, at forty, one cannot expect the boyish

roses of twenty, or the smooth brow of early virility. Perhaps they who knew my father when he was fifty, or thereabouts, would scarcely recognise in the good-humoured *embonpoint* merchant, the lithe and graceful strippling of thirty summers ago:—the slender sapling had become the sturdy oak, spreading its stately shelter on all around. Yes! certainly, youthful charms and graces fled with advancing years; but to the last the brow was calm, the blue eyes full of kindly enthusiasm, and the lips set in a mould, at once good and wise, and kind in the extreme!

Now, I must be forgiven, if I discourse a little about our family tree. I have often heard my grandmother say that she came of a noble Scotch family, descended from a certain Sir John Rushworth; the name “Mary Rushworth” is written in some books that we hold as heirlooms in our family; also that of Damoid and Dominus; and to her once belonged a splendid old English point-lace collar, now in my own possession. James Rushworth, the brother of this lady, resided in London; and she, after the death of her parents, keeping solitary state with her servants in a large house, and, feeling desolate and

forlorn, was easily induced by him to sell her estate, break up her establishment, and joining her fortune to his, settle down with him in his house in town. They seem to have been at that time a devoted brother and sister: but, alas! their happy dream of a peaceful home together was speedily dispelled: for he became the prey of a beautiful but designing woman, who persuaded him into marriage, and then dissipated his fortune, and that of her sister-in-law also—for the two incomes had never been duly separated—at the gaming table! Impoverished to ruin, heartbroken and betrayed, he returned to his native village, so sadly reduced, that he was glad to fill a dependent position on the very same estate, which had once called him master.

I noticed something the other day, which appears to me to have some connection with the derivation of our name, “Blott.” I read in an old almanack, what I daresay everybody knows, that the month of November was called by the Saxons, “*blot-monat*”—that is to say, “blood-month”—on account of the number of animals then slaughtered for the table. Now, you know, many people are fond of adding to their names, doubling the final con-

sonant, and affixing another vowel:—for instance, the lady who did not like to be called “Warren,” because it reminded her of the celebrated blacking-firm, and so wrote herself “Warene:” others are content with a single letter,—the Browns and the Smiths, &c., who acquire a genteel nomenclature by the addition of an e; and how do I know, but that my ancestors were seized with a freak of the kind; and from being “men of blot,” *i.e.*, “men of blood,”—soldiers, I should fancy,—became “men of blott!”

So, you see, I cannot consider my name as a blot on my escutcheon; for while some families are excessively proud and tenacious of the high blood, from which they claim descent, ours is certainly the real thing itself; and we must needs be satisfied with our ancestral cognomen. But what’s in a name?” Well! a good deal, I should say: for an honest name is a blessing not lightly to be contemned.

However, with the Blott element, died out the grand and older names of the race; and my dear grandfather and grandmother being good old-fashioned people, and devout christians, christened all their children, save the

youngest, by Scripture names : Esther, John, Caleb, Sarah, Martha, Mary, Samuel, Joshua, and William.

My father's mother, the daughter of Mary Rushworth, was an earnest, noble-hearted woman—tender and religious, hard working, and remarkably sincere. I was her especial pet ; and often have I marked the fire of her Scotch ancestry, kindling in her beautiful brown eyes, as she told me grand old tales of the Covenanters, and their martyr-spirit.

To this day, I never look upon a sweetbriar, without connecting it with her memory : for by the little cottage, where for many years my dear father supported her, grew one of these sweet shrubs, our English eglantine, to be known chiefly from its coarser companions—at least, when out of flower—by its welcome and delicate perfume. So she, planted by Providence in the rude soil of poverty, was to be distinguished from others, with whom she was commonly associated, for the most part, by the rare and lovely Christian graces of her character.

Two of her sons only kept watch by her dying bed—my father and an elder brother ;

and those two were first summoned to join her in the world beyond the grave. The others were far away, parted from her who had given them birth, on whose bosom they had been lulled to rest, and at whose knee they had learned their first lisping, childish prayers—severed, alas !

“By mountain, stream, and sea.”

One child, however, had preceded her to glory ; my Aunt Martha, her third daughter, who died very suddenly, not long before the decease of her mother. My Aunt was a true Christian, and lived very near her excellent parent ; but my grandmother being confined to her bed, could not see her daughter's remains before they were consigned to the dust. “Oh !” she said to me triumphantly,—“I shall see her, but not now.” “Yes,” I answered, “We shall see her indeed, when, too, we shall behold the King in His glory, in the land that is very far off.” For a few minutes she wept, and then falling back on her pillow, and gazing upward, as if she really saw her ransomed child before the throne of God, exclaimed—“How glorious !” My father was hastily summoned home on this mournful occasion,

and after he had gazed on his sister's peaceful rest, he said—"Though I loved her dearly, I felt I could be resigned to the Lord's will, for, like a wise virgin, she went forth at the Bridegroom's call, with her lamp trimmed and burning. But, oh ! it was with a feeling of intense relief that I saw the blinds were not down at the other house—my mother's ! God knows I could scarcely have borne to lose her yet ! and I rushed away from the bustle of the market, in an agony of terror, fearing lest it should be my mother—my own beloved mother !" And even as he spoke, his pale face showed how terrible had been the anguish of that overwhelming dread.

When, at last, the time came, and God called this revered parent to her happy home above, my father was again absent, and busy in the market. I was at her side, and I sent for him—for above all others, she yearned to see once more in the flesh, her dear son Samuel, the pride and joy, and comfort of her life ! The others stood around her bed, weeping.

Never shall I forget that scene :—the small chamber looking out on the heavy-laden apple trees ; the ripe fruit within reach of your hand

stretched forth from the casement ; the blue sky and the sunset's beams of crimson and gold ; and I, hot and flushed with the haste I had made to reply to her summons, standing trembling, and with difficulty keeping back the ready tears that trembled on my lashes, met the gaze of the pale heroic face, Roman-like in its clear-cut outlines, with its large brown beautiful eyes, that still retained much of their wonderful steady brightness, fixed upon me, as she lay back on the high white pillows, and heard her say—"Read to me, darling ! read that passage :—' O Israel, fear not ! for I have redeemed thee : I have called thee by thy name : thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee, &c.'"

My tears now were blinding my sight, and choking my voice ! but with a strong effort, I controlled myself ; and with her wistful eyes still gazing into mine, I read on—on—till the silvery lustre of the evening star shone in the blue nightfal sky, and through the open windows came the scent of the dewy flowers.

And still I read on, although I felt as if life's whole circle were narrowed into one focus of

pain. Still the large wistful eyes looked into my face, and they were lit with a triumphant joy, as I read from the Holy Book some sweet promise or pledge of the glory to be revealed—the glory to which she was hastening, oh ! how rapidly !

All was calm and quiet—so quiet that I could hear the loud throbbings of my own heart—and the time passed on, and the brown eyes became weary, or ever and anon turned languidly to the door. Or, the white locks were raised from the scarcely whiter pillows, and for the moment there was an uneasy movement, and then a falling back, as in hopeless but patient sadness. We knew whose name was trembling on her dying lips ; and greatly I feared that ere he whom she yearned to behold came once more to her side, the spirit would have forsaken its earthly tenement.

I had sent one of our fleetest horses, though well I knew the fleetest would be tardy to his anguished impatience ; and I listened—listened—till at last, as I was moistening the stiffening lips with a little wine on a feather, I heard him coming. “Thank God ! at last !”—but over the beautiful eyes, the dimness of death was

now rapidly stealing, and my heart ached for my father. Our good minister, with fitly chosen words of consolation and peace, was by my side: but if I heard, I could not heed! Only fell upon my ear the far-off sounds of those wheels, borne away from the cottage by the contrary wind: only the tramp of the brave horse, galloping—galloping—galloping, at a fearful rate, as if running a race with Death himself! Only, at last, the welcome, waited-for footstep on the stairs, and then—instead of the mellow cheery tones of the dear voice, I loved so well—low, heartbroken sobs, welling up from an anguish that would not be repressed.

I see him fling his arms wildly about her, and embrace her with a passionate yearning, and an unuttered cry upon his lips, for she responds not to his embrace. Sinking down into infinite stillness, she sees not the agonised face of her son: the sands of life are nearly run! only a little, a very little longer! Then he murmurs in her ear that name of names, sweeter and more penetrating than the name of husband, child, or friend! Instantly she looks up: the name of “Jesus” has pierced the dull

shades of Death, and she smiles ; a glorious light passes over her features ; she clasps his hand,—and all is over ! In his arms is only the poor clay tenement :—angels have borne the ransomed soul to its Father's House !

Such was my dear father's mother ! and often has he said to me—"Julia, have you not noticed that in the Bible, it is written 'such and such an one was his *mother*'"—as much as to say, "you need not wonder what such an one is, when such an one was his mother !" And I have given this slight sketch of my grandmother, that you may the better understand the manner of man, that *her* son must have been !

Next to her died my uncle Caleb : then, alas ! my father. Sometimes I could fancy her standing at the door of one of the "many mansions," calling them, one by one, to hasten home ; just as she used to do when they were boys :—standing, as she once told me, on the threshold of their rose-wreathed cottage (for the only luxury in which she indulged was flowers), beckoning to her children, one by one, to come home, ere the twilight faded into darkness !

And as life's sunset-radiance fell around them,
I could fancy her saying to them :—

“Come this way, darling,
Steer straight for me ;
Here safely in heaven,
I'm waiting for thee.”

My father was of a very sanguine, industrious, happy temperament ; exceedingly light-hearted, yet one who could bear great trials patiently ; of sensitive nature, yet not resenting provocation ; truthful ; courageous, and even in his earliest years, rather inclined to think on religious subjects. At ten years of age, it grieved him much that he was obliged to fight, by some naughty boys, several of them older than himself.

His parents were very poor, and unable sometimes to procure respectable raiment for their numerous offspring ; and the outgrown suit of one child necessarily descended to the next in age, and so on, till it was utterly worn out ; reminding one of the celebrated Irish shirt, which all the family wore in turn at church, the others remaining at home. Once, some one gave my father a jacket large enough for a man, and a kind-hearted farmer in the

neighbourhood, seeing him clad in this ungainly garment, presented him with a more suitable article, made of warm flannel. He never forgot the good man's benevolence; thenceforth the gift became an epoch in his life, and he frequently reverted to it in after years, and always with expressions of pleasure and sincerest gratitude. Long may the rich, who so seldom deprive themselves of any luxury, rejoice in the luxury of, doing good—a luxury, happily, in which all, even the poorest, may have a part.

The very farm on which my father once worked, in after years, became his own; and the masters, whom in those boyish days, he faithfully served, always spoke of him in terms of respect and commendation.

During a great scarcity, which prevailed in the early part of the present century, the poor suffered considerably; and barley bread, and very little of that, was all my grandparents had for the sustentation of themselves and their eight children. The poor father used to cut up the small loaf, and divide it among the hungry little ones around his knee, who ate it ravenously, though it was very different from

the wheaten bread to which they had been accustomed. Happily the repeal of the Corn Laws has thoroughly changed the state of things; and now, in case of a failure of crops, we have no need to fall back on barley-bread, since foreign corn is speedily drafted into the country. I suppose too, at the time of which I am writing, there were other sources of distress, over and above the bad harvest; for it must have been the old war-time, and provisions in consequence were frightfully dear.

Among so many, the poor little loaf was, of course, soon demolished, and the unsatisfied children would pull at their father's coat skirts, crying—"Barley-bread! barley-bread! just one little piece, father!" The father gave till he had no more to give, and sometimes the little hungry mouths had to go supperless to bed, and content themselves with the prospect of another meal on the morrow;—and among the wan, pinched faces that went away to their sad repose, was, of course, my father's; little child as he was, learning, even then, the hard, grand lesson of patient endurance! The poor mother herself, though worn and sinking from fatigue, through the long day's hard toil, would

frequently go without her share, that her children might have more. Hard lessons these, indeed, which we of a later, and more luxurious day, can scarcely comprehend.

No doubt they had their part, and a large one too, in forming my dear father's character, and moulding him to that quiet patience, and resolute firmness, which afterwards were among the distinguishing features of his life. It is good that a man should bear the yoke in his youth! Good for him to be nursed in the harsh but wholesome circumstances of adversity and self-denial, rather than in the soft, downy, and enervating lap of ease and lavish plenty. The stern hand of griping, uncompromising poverty, has trained to Spartan heroism, many an one, who falling upon a childhood and youth of luxury and indulgence, would, humanly speaking, have been at the best a mere cipher in the great world, wherein there is so much to be borne, and so much to be achieved,—a loiterer in the race,—a laggard in the mighty Battle of Life, which we must each and all fight for ourselves, and not by proxy.

One thing more of my father's childish days.

Once he consorted with some boys who had been stealing apples, and his mother punished him with very great severity. Afterwards, when he arrived at manhood, she referred to this circumstance, regretting that she had perhaps given him too sound a beating. "Ah, mother!" was his answer:—"I only wish you had punished me, yet more!" Her discipline must have been excellent; out of all that family of nine children, seven are Christians; and we have hopes that the other two may seek their parents' God. Four are now rejoicing with that mother and father in heaven, through the countless ages of eternity; and giving glory to Him that hath redeemed them with His precious blood. I might say, too, of our lost one, with the poet—

"More than this—his name reminds me
Of three friends, all true and tried;
And that name like magic binds me
Closer, closer to his side."

SIXPENCE "CAPITAL."

"In this dull world we cheat ourselves and one another of innocent pleasures by the score, by very carelessness and apathy. Invited to help in rendering joyful many a patient heart, we neglect the little that might have done it, and continually deprive creation of its share of kindness from us. The humble friend encouraged by your frankness, equals made to love you, and superiors gratified by attention and respect, looking out to benefit you kindly. How many pleasures here for one hand to gather! Instead of this, what have we rife about the world? frigid compliment, reserve, selfishness : for every one is struggling for his own ends.

"This is false, all bad! It is the slavery chain of custom rivetted by the foolishness of fashion. There are always persons who have nothing to recommend them but externals, such as looks, dresses, rank, and riches; and in order to exalt the honour of these, they combine to set a compact seal of silence on the heart and mind. Turn the tables upon them, ye real gentlemen. Speak freely, live warmly, look cheerfully, laugh heartily, explain frankly, exhort zealously, admire liberally, advise earnestly; and thus be not ashamed to show you have a heart. If some cold and selfish worldling greet your social efforts with a sneer, repay him with a good-humoured smile; for you possess treasures to which he is a stranger."

M. F. TUPPER.

CHAPTER II.



It is not a very original thing to say,—for I suppose it has already been said many more times than I have any idea of,—that we are all too apt to despise trifles! *Why* it is difficult to explain; for certainly, “Trifles make the sum of human things;” and but for the little links of the chain, the chain itself, as a whole, and as a perfect piece of workmanship, could never exist. And we often see for ourselves, how small beginnings terminate in important results; and how, by the goodness of God, a tiny seed of insignificance, may become a mighty plant of renown; even as the slighted

acorn, pressed carelessly into the soil by the hasty step of the heedless traveller, germinates, takes root, springs up a vigorous sapling, that the sunbeam quietly fosters, and the dews silently nourish, till in the fulness of time it expands into a majestic tree, the stately monarch of the woods, spreading far and wide its umbrageous arms, and becoming in its turn the parent of a thousand other oaks and oaklings,—at once the king and the father of the forest-wild !

My father embarked in mercantile pursuits at a very early age, and his first venture was in sixpenny-worth of “sweets,” which he sold for ninepence ! A clear return of fifty per cent. you perceive ; a very fair amount of profit, especially for so very juvenile and inexperienced a tradesman ! Then he set up in the “yeast business ;” going from one farm house to another, plodding many a weary mile in this very humble branch of commerce ; but always hopeful, resolute, and determined to succeed. He had happily a robust frame, and a stout heart, and the spirit of independence was strong and indomitable within him.

And God prospered his honest endeavours,

for, as you will see, this sixpence was the seed of future thousands.

He went his lonely, weary way from farm to farm, poorly clad, indeed, but never ragged: indeed, I have heard his old friends say that he was always scrupulously neat and clean. He used to tell me that, if ever he felt anything like pride in his life, it was when he first put on his new blue coat, with gilt buttons, and a snowy turn-up collar, bought with his own money, saved from his own hard earnings, after he had scrupulously paid for his board at home. And his companions jeered at him, and with perhaps a little natural envy, mocked him, and called him in derision,—“*Gentleman Blott!*” Little thought they, that a time would indeed arrive, when, in every sense of the word, he would deserve the title they gave him in their rude and boyish derision; some of them actually working on his land, his own hired servants, and treating him with all the respect they could possibly have manifested, had he been born to the good fortune, which his own diligence and perseverance so honourably achieved!

But to return to the yeast, and its sturdy

little vendor. After a time, he tried another speculation. He borrowed half-a-crown, which he repaid in a fortnight—somewhat, I believe, to the surprise of the friend by whom it was kindly lent—and with this small capital, he bought fish, and traded therein very successfully. Years afterwards, he was once bargaining for some fish in his own kitchen, and in answer to some trivial remark, while I was superintending domestic affairs, the dealer said shrewdly—“Why! you are too good a judge of *fish* for that!”—his emphasis fully explaining the allusion. My father only looked across to me and smiled. Perhaps I did not catch his meaning quite so easily, for I jestingly remarked that fish were certainly teetotallers, since they drank nothing but water, and being myself a total abstainer, I cared not how often I saw them at my table!

I have often been surprised at my father's keen, critical insight into general literature, his appreciation of that which was sound and useful, and his admiration of a witty or cleverly pointed passage. Able on the instant to grasp a fine idea, and make it all his own; he was yet ever ready to put his shoulder to the wheel

of any common-place duty, however painful or disagreeable it might be : and he could and did discern the entire bearings of a subject, and take in its breadth and depth, while others were scarcely able to satisfy themselves as to its cardinal points.

This, of course, made him invaluable in a commercial point of view : such qualities as he largely possessed being, as we all know, the very heart and soul of business.

I used to read to him my own compositions ; and I have to thank him for many an idea, and for the polish and finish of many an otherwise rough and imperfect sentence. How often too, with profit and delight, have I listened to his Sabbath evening expositions, and to his Sunday-night village-sermons ! His mind seemed ready for everything that approved itself to his judgment ; and his physical frame must have been endowed with wonderful vigour and elasticity, for though he was frequently engaged till twelve o'clock on the Saturday night, arranging and ticketing his samples for the Monday's markets—my mother, brothers, with myself and clerk helping him—he was up betimes on the Sabbath morning, off to the

Sunday school, at nine o'clock, in his place in the sanctuary at the appointed hour, both morning and afternoon, and with his class also, in the after part of the day ; and then over the hills for a four miles' ride, to his village-preaching, whether it were summer heat and sunshine, or winter's wind and snow ! Then up again at five on the Monday morning for Mark Lane ; and at a market every day in the week, averaging two hundred and sixty miles weekly of journeyings ; and yet I never heard him say—"How tired I am !"

He often laughed with me over the curious encounters of his early days, when he first began to be known as a rising tradesman ; and to be received as a friend in the very houses where he had formerly carried on his juvenile business, as yeast-vendor. The young ladies would sometimes curiously ask him "where he came from !" little dreaming that he had lived all his life in their immediate neighbourhood ; or perhaps, to speak more accurately, in every case, within a few miles, at the furthest. They had forgotten, or they failed to recognise in the handsome young merchant, whose attentions they were willing enough to receive, the

poor half-clad little urchin, who through all seasons and in all weathers, had been seen on his yeast-rounds, going from house to house in the prosecution of his thriving little trade. They also were changed from rosy girls, full of fun and mischief, into staid, marriageable damsels, whose prudent mammas would not at all have objected to find in him a future son-in-law.

But my father, with all his enthusiastic nature, was by no means devoid of proper caution ; he was too wise to be carried away by an impulse, and he looked before he leaped. He required something more in a girl than the mere glittering externals of beauty and fashion ; and though one of those who determine to acquire a permanent home and position, before entering upon the marriage-state, he yet rejected the idea of making an alliance for the sake of money. "No !" he used to say, "matrimony was the one transaction of life that ought to be conducted without the hollow chink of gold ; and he preferred a fortune *in* a wife, rather than a large portion *with* one !"

We used to say he was "Jack-of-all-trades,"

which was very nearly the truth ; and strange to say, though he was apprenticed to none, he was master of them all. He had never properly learned to plough, and yet, at a ploughing-match in our county, he bore away the palm from others who had been carefully bred to agricultural pursuits alone. He was corn-factor ; wine, hop, and fruit merchant ; farmer ; miller ; and dealer in bran, pollards, meal, and seeds. He knew all about these several branches of business, and worked them all honestly, respectably, and greatly to his own profit.

Once, when rather overwrought, and feeling oppressed with cares and responsibilities, he exclaimed—"I wish I were a child again !" He seemed almost to envy his baby-boy, whose kingdom was the floor. It made me sad to hear him : surely life, even successful life, cannot be worth so much as we, in our undaunted youth, suppose, when one is wishing to resign wealth, honour, and preferment, to be a simple child again ! After all, sunset must be better than sunrise : the calm, peaceful sunset of a day of piety and diligence—a day "well-spent"

in the highest acceptation of the term. And that sunset *may* be sweetest and fairest, let us work while it is called to-day !

The following lines are so appropriate to this little incident, that I must venture to quote them here: if already you know them, dear friends, I beg you to forgive me !

"BEHIND THE MASK."

- "It was an old distorted face—
An uncouth visage, rough and wild ;
Yet from behind, with laughing grace,
Peeped the fresh beauty of a child.
- "And so contrasting, fair and bright,
It made me of my fancy ask
If half earth's wrinkled grimness might
Be but the baby in the mask.
- "Behind grey hairs and furrowed brow
And withered look that life puts on ;
Each as he wears it, comes to know
How the child hides—and is not gone.
- "For while the inexorable years
To saddened features fit their mould ;
Beneath the work of time and tears,
Waits something that will not grow old.
- "And pain, and petulance, and care,
And wasted hope and sinful stain,
Shape the strange guise the soul doth wear,
Till her young life arise again.
- .

“ The beauty of his boyhood’s smile ;—
What human faith could find it now
In yonder man of grief and guile,
A very Cain with branded brow ?

“ Yet overlaid and hidden still
It lingers—of his life a part—
As the scathed pine upon the hill
Holds the young fibres at his heart.

“ And haply round the Eternal throne,
Heaven’s pitying angels shall not ask
For that last look the world hath known,
But for the face behind the mask.”

RELIGIOUS IMPRESSIONS, AND YOUTHFUL FOLLIES.



“Star-gemmed floor of the land I love,
Tell me, and tell me now ;
What are the myriad starry gems
That bedeck thy jewelled brow ?

“Some will say thou’rt a world like this—
Where no sin nor darkness reigns :
Where the men of a thousand years ago,
Still bound across thy plains !

“Many, if such there be, fair worlds
Would ask no brighter doom—
Than within your gorgeous palaces
To find a lasting home.

“So let them, more ambitious, I
More towering wishes frame :
I would not dwell in these, but with
The Lord of all of them !

“They may be near to the pearly gate—
They may stand close by heaven—
But who would dwell in the servants’ lodge,
When the mansion house is given ?”

My Father's favourite Poem.

“And shall we meet the Master so,
Bearing our withered leaves ?
The Saviour looks for perfect fruit ;
We stand before Him—humble, mute—
Hearing the word He breathes—
Nothing but leaves !”

CHAPTER III.



My father, as I told you, came under religious impressions at a very early age. When only a boy of twelve, he used to pray, looking up into the sky, knowing God only as a great and powerful Being ; not understanding at all the doctrines of redemption, or the mediatorial office of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ ! His conflicts with the evil one seem, even then, to have been very terrible : he used to pray constantly at a certain place, because he felt impelled to do so, and dared not refrain ; and sometimes he thought Satan strove so hard for him, that his fear rose to terror, lest he should actually fly away with him, body and soul.

Sometimes this conflict in his mind was almost unendurable—this continuous contest between good and evil: and sometimes when he deemed his prayers unanswered, in his anguish and misery, he would throw himself on the ground, and, as he himself expressed it, “wallow there,” picking up the dirt to humble his pride, and crying out that he was “of the earth, earthy!” Yet persevering nevertheless in an agony of prayer and supplication.

He saw not the thorny path before him; yet he went on his way hour by hour, and day by day, struggling through the awful darkness of this mental Gethsemane, and like his Master before him, fain sometimes, in his anguish, to exclaim—“My God! my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”

When going to and fro among the farm-houses with his yeast, Satan, he said, used to buffet him, filling his mind, during those long and solitary walks, with strange thoughts and fearful doubts, till his childish reason almost trembled in the balance. Once he fancied two men were standing behind the hedge, saying mockingly—“Your religion is worth nothing.” Instead of passionately rebuking his mythical

revilers, he said humbly to himself—"Well! if my religion is, indeed, worth nothing, then I will begin again at the lowest round of the heavenly ladder!" And again he prayed and struggled: lingering in that place—a pleasant little osier-island in the stream—all unconscious of time, for nearly two hours.

I think it was about this time that my father was most terribly frightened by a dream,—a dream that the Judgment Day was come; and that it rained fire and brimstone from the blazing skies, which glowed like one tremendous oven; while the flames encompassed him, so that he could not escape! But the impressions caused by this dreadful dream soon passed away, and indeed, his religion altogether seemed inclined to wither and die out, like the good seeds that sprung up from the stony places, where there was no depth of earth, and because they had no root, as soon as the sun was up, were scorched and withered away.

His religious impressions, he told me, wore off, and though he still kept up a form of devotion, he ceased to pray with the heart. Then he was induced to attend a club-feast; and as he went off, dressed in holiday attire,

with a smile on his lip, but with secret remorse in his bosom, he turned to say "Good-bye" to his father, who sadly and tearfully replied—"Samuel! I had hoped better things of you." But still he went on; and for four years the world and its vanities held sway over his soul: gay company became his delight; and prayer, except the mere service of the lip, was entirely neglected.

It was at this time he borrowed half-a-crown as capital in his new trade of fish-dealing; and the person who kindly lent it to him, hardly expected its return, knowing so well the liveliness of his disposition, and the thoughtlessness and the love of pleasure, which at that time characterised him. I think I mentioned before, that, in two weeks, my father honourably discharged his obligation.

Afterwards,—still thriving in worldly concerns,—he took a small shop, and dealt in foreign fruit; and here, again, it pleased God to grant him prosperity.

But still he walked in the paths of folly, though he was happily preserved from falling into vicious courses. He was now a tall slender youth, graceful, and much admired by the fair

sex ; and his moral character was so unimpeachable—though on several occasions he had been sorely tempted—that parents would trust him with the care of their daughters on long journeys, and on several other occasions ; and he always proved himself worthy of their confidence, and preserved to the last their admiration and esteem.

Many snares were laid for him : one unhappy female companion—a gay, handsome, unprincipled young woman—did her utmost to lead him from the paths of respectability and virtue : but he was mercifully preserved from her wiles, and kept from all the evil which encompassed him about. Though never declining into vicious courses, he seems however to have led a wildish sort of life, for among the memories of those youthful years, is an account of an illness which overtook him far from home, at one of those club-feasts, which seemed for some time to present themselves to his lively, boyish disposition, as alluring and irresistible gaieties.

One day, he and several of his friends, wearied of the rural seclusion of their homes, and fired perhaps with what they had heard of

other places, determined to set out in company, *and see the world!* Being in the heyday of their youth, and full of energy, animal vigour, and overflowing health, they soon carried their plan into execution; and they began their journey in the highest spirits, each one with his musical instrument; the accordion being, as far as I can recollect, that which was selected by my father.

I have that old accordion treasured up somewhere now, for he played it beautifully; and the sight of it, brings back many a sweet memory of sunny Sabbath eves, when my dear father and I wandered together through the shady orchards, and talked, till our hearts burned within us, of Him in Whom alone was all our trust, and all our hope. And every now and then, while the cuckoo's note still echoed on the warm breeze, and the brooding murmur of snowy doves, seemed breathing peace and tranquillity on all around, he would burst out with some grand old tune, set to words of sacred trust and joy,—such as—

“My God! my Help in ages past,
My Hope in years to come.”

But dwelling on these hallowed remembrances

of a beloved past, I am forgetting my tale :— let me resume. They went forth that day, a gay, light-hearted, hopeful troop, ready for any adventure, and expecting, no doubt, to distinguish themselves in some way or other during their absence, and to return in due time to their native village, rejoicing in their prowess, and covered with glory ! There was my father, and there were three others, whom I will call John, Stephen, Robert. John scarcely shared the enthusiasm of his friends ; indeed, I hardly know how he came to involve himself in so wild an expedition : he was a quiet, steady fellow, not at all disposed to be a hero, nor wishing to arrive at that dangerous but flattering distinction. Stephen was a sharp fellow, clever and unscrupulous. Robert was a regular quiz, full of jest and banter, and liking to get people into hot water, for the sheer fun and amusement of fishing them out again. And my father, sensitive, very fond of variety, highly musical and enthusiastic, with that strong disposition to a religious life, slumbering only, not crushed or dead, within his heart, looking upon his impromptu journey as a sort of provincial tour ! Such was the quartette, starting

forth in all the ignorance and buoyancy of youth to enjoy themselves,—and “to see the world!” They were to have one purse: my father was to play the accordion, Robert the violin, Stephen the flute, and John the tambourine. I suppose they expected to make quite a little fortune, by the exercise of so much combined musical talent: but the first day they walked many a weary mile, without getting one penny. The cold wintry evening closed in, a piercing wind swept across the country, penetrating their thin attire, and making them bitterly regret their luckless position; and still they tramped on, almost given up to despair.

At last a cart laden with straw passed them, and they were fortunately allowed to ride: and then Robert, catching in the dim light a glimpse of poor John’s remorseful looks, began to rally him on his despondency. John was doubtless thinking of the warm chimney-corner, and the well-spread supper-table at home, when Bob cried out—“John! John! where are you, John?” And he pushed the straw aside, nodding his little head about like a mocking bird, and saying tauntingly—“Like this, John? pleasant under the straw, John? Play ‘Home,

sweet home,' John!" And he himself commenced the opening strain on his violin. The satire was too painful, John could bear it no longer; his *dulce domum* rose up before him in its fairest, sweetest guise, and he buried his face in the straw, and fairly burst into tears! His other two comrades took Bob to task most admirably; but the tormenting youth heeded them not at all, and only continued his strain of "Home, sweet home," with inimitable pathos, till they too were fain to contrast most painfully the difference between to-day and yesterday, and to shrink back appalled from the hardships and difficulties of the morrow.

It would not do! they ignominiously gave up their wild-goose chase, and returned home next day,—wiser and sadder men. And so ended my father's grand "provincial tour!"

REST AT LAST.



“Talk we of morals—O Thou bleeding Lamb—
The best morality is loving Thee!”

Young.

“As the Lesbian, in false worship,
Hung her harp upon the shrine;
When the world lost its attractions,
So do I offer mine.

“But in another spirit,
With a higher hope and aim;
And in a holier temple,
And to a holier name.

“I offer up affections,
Violent and void and vain;
I offer years of sorrow,
Of the mind and body's pain.

“Saying—‘Wrong and grief have brought me,
To thy temple as a home;
I am sad and broken-hearted,
And, therefore, I am come.’

“Let the incense of my sorrow,
Be on high a sacrifice;
The worn and contrite spirit,
Thou alone wilt not despise.”

L. E. L.

CHAPTER IV.



I THINK I told you, that for four years my father's religious impressions seemed to have disappeared ; he ceased to pray, and, of course, he ceased to struggle with the temptations of Satan, and with the evil of his own heart. And yet, the spark of vital piety was, by God's mercy, not extinguished ; it only smouldered, unseen, and almost unconsciously : and sometimes sudden remorse would fill his mind ; and regret for those days, whenever in anguish and darkness he sought his God, would come suddenly upon him, and fill him with sorrow and self-upbraiding, that, for the time, well-nigh reduced him to despair.

Hearing of Jesus Christ only by name, he did not know Him as the Saviour of sinners; he did not recognise in Him, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. He knew that he must pray to the Almighty for the pardon of his many offences: but he did not understand that through the One Intercessor and Mediator must he plead with the Father, for the remission of all his guilt, for the blotting out of all his transgression, and the full forgiveness of all his sins, whether of omission or of commission! About this time—his seventeenth or eighteenth year—he fell ill of an ague, and suffered so long and so much, that his recovery became doubtful, and he felt persuaded himself that his days on earth were drawing to a close. And now, as he said, the law was a schoolmaster to bring him to Christ; and in his hour of deepest distress, in his utmost need, when heart and flesh were apparently failing, and when the great and awful Eternity seemed opening to his apprehensive gaze, it pleased the Lord to reveal Himself to His almost despairing child—to fill him with the sense of pardon and peace; to take away all his fears, and give to him a perfect faith,

and a blessed rest in Jesus Christ his only Saviour, and henceforth his only Master !

Weak as he was, the joy was almost too much ;—the joy of those first happy hours of Christian life. He was at peace now : living or dying, all would be well with him ! Perhaps, like many another young believer, whose heart is newly filled with love to Christ, he would fain have reached with one bound the end of his mortal probation ; having a desire to depart and be for ever with Him who had washed him from his sins in His own precious blood, and numbered him among the sons of God, and the heirs of a glorious immortality !

Languid and worn, yet full of a calm and intense joy, he lay, hour after hour, musing over the wondrous pages of that matchless dream of the holy John Bunyan : that golden “wonder-book” of youth and age ; till, as he fancied, he felt himself placidly and slowly floating away to the eternal haven, whither he longed to be ! A little, little further on, and surely the swift current of time would mingle with the vast illimitable ocean of the no more dreaded eternity. Surely his little bark was not so very far from shore : surely

his little day was almost done. And as his book lay before him, it seemed to him that the fragrant flowers around his little casement sent up to their Creator the incense of a pure and ceaseless praise! And far beyond, in the mysterious depths of the crimsoned west, he fancied he saw the gleam of the golden gates, and heard the faint echoes of the "everlasting song."

He had found his rest; his sure hope; his unfailing peace and joy:—he had found Christ! No longer applied to him these expressive lines:—

"Walking in darkness this beautiful earth,
Seeing only a dreary dearth.

"Seeing never, in flower-graves drear,
The buds to blossom another year.

"Blind to the sun-light, to all of us given—
To earth's best beauty—and blind to Heaven.

"Honoured by men, he dwelt in the throng,
His life-path leading in sunlight along.

"But down in the darkness his spirit lay,
Never seeing the light of day.

"Sometimes a feeling of vague regret,
Yet never awaking,—and blinded yet!

"'Blinded yet!' 'tis the saddest cry
That ever arose from a soul on high!

"'Blinded yet!' will he never see
The path that leads to the light to be?

“When this life, with its dreams and hopes is gone,
And the life to be, comes silently on ;
Will his soul go forth, when the two are met,
To the great Hereafter—*blinded yet !*”

No ! he was blinded no longer : Christ had touched the eyes of his soul, and he saw, and went on his way rejoicing in the glorious light of the Sun of Righteousness !

But are there none who will read these pages “ *blinded yet ?* ” Ah ! let them not sink from this world’s darkness, into that blacker and more rayless night that knows no dawn—no hope of light to come—but only the ceaseless, fruitless wail of utter and unending despair :—
“ *too late ! too late !* ”

However, my dear father was not so soon to lay down the cross and wear the crown ; not yet was he to doff the armour of the field : many a hard fight was before him still : and it behoved him to endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and as a faithful servant to toil in his Master’s vineyard. His work was ready for him, and he must needs bring to spiritual labour all that tact, and wisdom, and untiring zeal, which he had so long brought to the due discharge of his worldly toil.

Thanks to the excellent nursing, and the

tender care of his good mother, by God's grace he recovered, and began once more a life of industry and perseverance.

Before his illness, he had thriven considerably; and he had bought a cart, and a donkey to draw it; no small additions to the humble stock of those days, and a great convenience to him, in the way of his trade. The donkey rejoiced in the euphonious name of "*Joe Fardell!*" His first task after his illness, when yet not strong enough to undertake anything really laborious, was to build a shed for this favoured animal; and this poor hovel, which seemed to other eyes only a mean shelter for a mean dumb creature, became to him a very Bethel and gateway of Heaven. For he consecrated it by prayer, using it as his private closet of devotion; often wrestling with that Divine Stranger, who met our forefather Jacob, "in the dim tract of Peniel," ages and ages long ago, revealing then, as now, His Name and nature, of love omnipotent and immortal!

Many a blessing did he win from Him who heareth and answereth prayer; from Him in Whose sight that poor hut was consecrated as the dome of the proudest cathedral in Christen-

dom ; for God seeth not as man seeth ; and He looks not upon costly shrines, and flowery altars, and sacerdotal pomp, and ritual : but on the secret yearning of the heart—the prayer that goes up to Him in spirit and in truth. Prayer may lack the stately temple—it can never lack the fervent heart : for lacking that, it is prayer no longer, but only the vain repetition of words that have no depth, no meaning, that can never bring down those showers of blessings, that God waits to bestow, above all that we can ask or conceive.

About this time he met with an adventure. A friend had commissioned him to take something of importance in a hamper, to London ; and accordingly he went up to town ; and being only eighteen, innocent of much of the evil that is in the world, and simple-minded, he narrowly escaped falling into the clutches of two metropolitan sharpers.

One of them pretended to know him quite well, and invited him to go with them to a certain inn, offering to stand treat for a glass of wine.

Being tired, and needing refreshment, he went, carrying his hamper with him. “ Yes,”

said the sharper, continuing the conversation :
—“I knew I had seen you before ; such a handsome face as yours isn’t easily forgotten, my dear fellar !”

“But,” returned my father, innocently—
“where did you meet me ? I really don’t recollect !”

“Now my dear friend,” replied the man ;
“don’t look so innocent : you know all about it. Here ! take your wine, and let’s talk of something better ; and don’t try to pass yourself off as a stranger on me, for I’m up to snuff : I didn’t think you would want to forget an old friend.”

At this moment came in the second sharper, dressed like an old farmer, but very bullying in his manners. He did not pretend to know either my father or his companion ; but began at once in very insulting language, to abuse them as being “no gentlemen,” because they were drinking “such stuff” of wine. “I’ll wager you are no gentlemen !” he cried, braggingly :—“Why don’t you have champagne ? Waiter ! the morning paper and a bottle of champagne.”

The waiter, however, did not return, and

the champagne was not forthcoming : so he who gave the magnificent order, resumed :—
“ Come ! I’ll wager you can’t lay down twenty sovereigns to mine, young man ! ”

“ O ! can’t he ? ” interposed the other ; “ go along, and don’t come insulting us ! the idea of it ! ” Then to my father,—“ Lay it down, lay it down ! don’t let us be insulted by that big, burly bully ! ”

“ I saw through them then,” said my father —“ I saw their plot ; the door was close at hand, I flung it open, caught up my hamper, and was off down the street ; for I was agile enough then. They called after me, but I hurried on ; and so, thank God, their intended victim escaped them.”

After all, though, I think they were very common-place London sharpers, and by no means well instructed in their trade.

●

THE CHRISTIAN TRADESMAN.



“Keep him down!—Aye, keep him down! What business has a man to rise, without a name, without friends, without honourable blood in his veins? ‘We have known his father before him!’ and what merit can there be in the young stripling?”

“Such is the cry of the world when a man of sterling character attempts to break away from the cords of ignorance and poverty, and rise to a position of truth and honour. The multitude are excited to envy—they cannot endure to be outstripped by those who grow up side by side with their children. And hence the opposition a man meets with in his native place. Despite of this feeling, many noble minds have risen from obscurity, and lived down their opponents. ‘Persevere—mount up—and startle the world.’”

Anon.

CHAPTER V.



MY dear father, like all other good men, had his enemies : but the worst name even they could bestow upon him, was—"that most religious tradesman!" In their irony they spoke the simplest truth.

When yet engaged in the sale of fish, and struggling hard to keep up his business, he never would sell a single penny's worth on the Sunday, though it was on that day that his fellow fishmongers reaped their largest gains. He little thought then, that the time would come, when his Master would put upon him the high honour of being "a fisher of men." But it is written, "them that honour Me, I will

honour ! ” and God always makes good His own word, even in the eyes of an unbelieving world. To his active, eager mind, that would grind itself to dust, if there were nothing to be ground, temptations of this kind must have presented themselves with peculiar force ; but he was always enabled to resist them, and to keep unstained his Christian profession before men.

At eighteen years old, he began to deal in “Pollard,” and he prospered so much that from that time, he ceased to confine himself to one single article of commerce. It was then he put out his first little shop window, looking into a garden ; and often, as he passed it by in after years, he looked at it with pleasure, saying always, that it gave him more joy than any of his later, and more expensive erections. Certainly, our first beginnings, achieved with pain and by slow degrees, are dearer to us than the well-built and compact schemes of after and more prosperous years !

As my father grew older, his scrupulosity in no wise diminished : worldly success never hardened his heart, or blunted the tenderness of his conscience ; and to his latest day, he was

famed for his integrity. I have been told by other dealers, that people would often say :—
“ Oh ! take it to Mr. Blott : he will give you what it is really worth.”

Poor people often came to him in this way, with samples of grain, knowing that in his hands they were perfectly safe ; his judgment being as intact as his honour. One poor man, in particular, once brought to him a parcel of seed, with that fine purple bloom on it, that factors and dealers prize so much, and offered it at a very low price ; promising also that the buyer should have more of it, at the same figure, if he found that it suited his purpose.

My father simply said—“ You have brought me your seed not knowing its value : I will give you double the price you have asked for it, and that will leave me a fair market profit, which is all I wish to claim.” I never heard of this little incident from my father’s own lips : for he was not one to sound his own praises, and his Christian simplicity prevented him from attaching any singularity to the peculiar justness and uprightness of his conduct in trade : and he probably thought, that the other dealers would have acted in a precisely

similar way. Apart from religious principle, he was honest as a matter of course ; he was upright, as by instinct ; and perfect candour and unblemished truth seemed to be as natural a law of his being, as breathing or taking food and rest. Hence doubtless his wonderful success in life !

Nor was he lacking in generosity : he gave freely, in proportion to his income, to every good cause :—the Bible Society and the Religious Tract Society every year received the benefit of his large-hearted subscriptions, and many other charitable institutions were also the subjects of his kindly support. In his personal and domestic expenditure, he was always frugal, but never mean ; and he knew how to practise prudence without parsimony.

Often he has returned home, laughing, and saying to me—“ There my child, I have had a good day, so I have brought you home a new shawl ”—or whatever the present might be :—“ you wanted one, though I know you intended to make the old one do a little longer ! ”

“ But father ! ” I was sometimes constrained to say—“ it is so handsome ! so good ! Oh, thank you for it ! ”—And his merry answer

would be:—"not too good for a good little girl:—so kiss me for it, dear!" Oh! his genial warmth, his loving tenderness, his home affections were as beautiful as his uprightness and generosity in his dealings with the outer world. Like all good men, his happiest hours were spent by his own fireside, and in the society of those who were nearest as well as dearest of kin.

FIRST LOVE AND MARRIAGE.



“Room for a noble-man to pass—
Not in rich robes and trappings gay—
No fop decked out before the glass!
But—clad in sober grey—
A noble-man in heart is he,
With mind for his nobility.

“His crest—a soul in virtue strong;
His arms—a heart with candour bright;
Which gold blinds not to what is wrong,
Or bribes from what is right.
The patent of his courtly race,
Behold it in his open face!”

N. P. Willis.

. . . “Never more
Alone upon the threshold of my door,
Of individual life shall I command
The uses of my heart, or lift my hand
Serenely in the sunshine as before.

“What shall I do?
And what I dream, include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes, when I sue
God for myself! He hears that name of thine,
And sees within my eyes the tears of two!”

Browning.

CHAPTER VI.



AT last, after the struggles of years—fought, it must be remembered, almost, if not quite, singlehanded, and at the beginning in a youth so tender, that it may perhaps be called *childhood*—there came a blessed period of rest and calm. He had a new home of his own, and therein he settled happily and comfortably, the Christian head of his own little household ; and for the first time in his life, he experienced that absence of wearing anxiety, and the presence of that calm content, which alike conduce to the prosperity of body and mind. He had gallantly won his way to his own thriving and respectable position in society.

My grandfather and grandmother!—how proud they were of this dear, good, clever son of theirs; once a poor boy, half-clad, and sometimes half-fed, but now, through his own diligence, courage, and integrity, a prosperous young tradesman! and able, and more than willing, to provide for his parents many a little comfort, which, but for him, they could never have dreamed of enjoying.

And now, happily settled, with enough for the present, and goodly promise for the future, Samuel Blott began to think about taking to himself a wife. He may have *thought* of it earlier, but he only *thought*; for it was one of his maxims, that “you should get a nice cage for your bird, ere you attempt to catch it;” a poetical translation of the good old adage—“before you marry, make sure of a home wherein to tarry.” But now, having a very pretty, nice cage in readiness, or rather a very cosy little nest, he naturally wanted his bird; that is, he began seriously to contemplate marriage—not, as is sometimes the case, as a mere mercantile transaction, whereby a few hundreds, or even thousands, more or less, may be secured; but as a new and higher motive

for increased industry, and for widening his circle of happiness, and for becoming a wiser, happier, and perhaps a better man; since domestic ties tend surely to soften the ruggedness of man's nature, and to develop a thousand little traits of tenderness and self-sacrifice, that would otherwise remain dormant and unsuspected.

To relate properly the story of my father's first love and marriage, I must go back again to his boyish days—to his seventeenth year; and I must introduce you to another person—"Charlotte"—the first "Mrs. Samuel Blott!"

Charlotte, or Lottie, as she was more familiarly called by her friends and family, had just left school, when she and her future husband first encountered each other. She was a very beautiful girl, refined and intellectual, dark eyed and dark hair, her rich raven black tresses falling in wildest profusion round her slender throat, curling luxuriantly round an ivory forehead, and shading a finely curved and rose-lit cheek! To judge from her brother, whom I have seen, and to whom, my father affirmed, she bore the most striking likeness, I should imagine she must have been the very picture

of that proud yet winning style of beauty, whose admirers are so numerous, that one might call them "Legion!"

They met in this wise:—One day Miss Lottie came cantering on her fine horse, along the very road where my father was walking beside a horse and cart. She wore, of course, her long riding habit; her long streaming curls were floating back upon the breeze, and her cheek was crimsoned with the roseate hue of perfect health and pleasant exercise. My father, a fair-haired, blue-eyed Saxon, not seventeen, was walking then, as I told you, by his cart and horse, going about his own business; and just as the young lady on her spirited steed came up with the sober plodding Dobbin, she dropped her whip.

My father immediately picked up the pretty, silver-headed little riding-switch, and tossing back his own fair curls, and making his very best bow, presented it to the fair horsewoman, blushing as he did so, like a sensitive girl. He was really, he said afterwards, "perfectly dazzled with her marvellous beauty."

Miss Lottie pulled out her purse; but my father, of the true chivalric spirit, that never

fails in its "*devoir aux dames*," immediately turned away, and with thanks declined the proffered recompense. She looked puzzled at finding a farmer's lad with the tone of a gentleman; and with one of those sweet, bright smiles, that lingered so long in his memory, as *never* to be forgotten, said, hesitatingly:—"Will you not take it?" He answered, proudly—"No, Miss! the pleasure of giving you the whip back again is quite enough." "Then I will not press you," she returned, blushing faintly herself; "but many thanks for your kindness to me this morning!"

And so she rode away on her^l gallant steed, and my father went on with Dobbin and the cart. But the memory of that lovely face, blushing down upon him from its rich, shading, dark curls, haunted him for many and many a day! But he spoke to no one of that morning's resplendent vision—only to himself he said:—

"For he should wear a kingly crown,
Who wears her in his thought."

Often, as time went on, he reproached himself most bitterly for the folly of thinking of her still; he, a poor peasant's son; she, a rich

farmer's daughter—a farmer who might possibly give him a place of labour on his farm, but would certainly never permit him a place in his daughter's affections !

Some years passed away, and the pair met again ; but under strangely altered circumstances.

Charlotte's father, a proud, gay man, had run through all his property, and was dead : her mother had died some time previously. And poor, beautiful Lottie, still, strange to say, unmarried and unaffianced, was obliged to take a dependent situation as governess, for her own support, in the very same neighbourhood where my father was then residing.

The poor girl felt her position keenly : she had been an only and an indulged child ; and great was the contrast between her former happy, wealthy home, of which she had been, after her mother's death, the sole and petted mistress, and this home of the stranger, where she was only tolerated in consideration of her services, and where she was looked upon as a mere hireling, and treated accordingly. She was very lonely too, and her heart was sad within her ; and the brightness of the sunny

past only added a deeper shade to the gloom of the present ; a present which looked as grey, and monotonous, and chilly, and uninviting as any one's present could possibly be.

My father was then just beginning to be talked of as a rising young man. She, too, was clever, refined, and had completed her education, at what, in those quiet, unpretentious days, was esteemed "a first-rate boarding school." Casually—or shall I not say—*providentially* they met. He could scarcely help feeling glad that they who were once so far apart, were now, at last, on a footing of equality ; though in worldly circumstances, he—as the man ought always to be—was, of course, at considerable advantage. Her misfortune was in some sort his good fortune ; and right joyful was his true and honest heart, to find that no longer was there any real obstacle in the way of a frank declaration of his long concealed and constant passion. He proposed, and was accepted.

In company with a mutual friend, he took her to inspect her future home. She laughed at his grand bachelor arrangements, saying she would soon see better order maintained,

when she came to be housekeeper : and he too joined in her merriment, telling her, gravely, she must not “despise the day of small things.”

After a few months' engagement, they were married, and were, I believe, as happy as they deserved to be : which is certainly saying a great deal.

BEREAVEMENT.



"The face which, duly as the sun,
Rose up for me with life begun,
To mark all bright hours of the day
With hourly love, is dimmed away—
And yet my days go on, go on.

"The tongue which like a stream could run
Smooth music o'er the roughest stone,
And every morning, with 'Good-day,'
Make each day good, is hushed away—
And yet my days go on, go on.

"The heart which, like a staff, was one
For mine to lean and rest upon ;
The strongest on the longest day,
With steadfast love, is caught away—
And yet my days go on, go on.



"By anguish that made pale the sun,
I hear *Him* charge His saints, that none
Among His creatures anywhere
Blaspheme against Him with despair,
However darkly days go on.

"Take from my head the thorn-wreath brown !
No mortal grief deserves that crown.
O Supreme Love, chief misery !
The sharp regalia are for thee,
Whose days eternally go on !"

"Last Poems."

CHAPTER VII.



Yes! very happily did my father and his sweet wife spend their short wedded life: for brief indeed it was. His Heavenly Father—seeing good to take from him, when he had scarcely learnt to know the full blessedness of his lot, his dearest earthly treasure—laid His chastening hand upon him, and caused him for a time to eat his daily bread in sorrow of heart, and to spend weary nights in tossing to and fro upon his solitary pillow, in weeping and desolation of spirit.

Calmly that much beloved one reposed her brow on her Saviour's bosom, and breathed her soul away into everlasting rest.

“At midnight came the cry,
To meet thy Lord prepare.”

For while all around were quietly sleeping, her pretty twin babes also slumbering in their cradle, she passed away from earth to that brighter and better world beyond the grave. And when early in the morning, her anxious husband came to enquire of nurse, "how her mistress was,"—what was his horror, his astonishment, his overwhelming grief, to find her, whom he loved so passionately, his own fair loving Charlotte, still and placid in the cold embrace of death! There she lay on her pillow—a rose gathered in all the bloom and beauty of its early prime—calm, quiet, serenely beautiful: but never more to answer smile with smile, never more to meet his glance, or clasp his hand till the great uprising day, when this corruption shall be raised in incorruption, and this mortal, in wondrous and glorious immortality.

And he, the stricken one, came and said, half apprehensively, "Awake, Lottie dear! it is morning!" and he saw the still face, and the fixed expression, and he knew that for her had arisen the morning of that day that knows not cloud or night. She had departed, to be "for ever with the Lord," and he was left on

earth, in all the overflowing anguish of a first and unlooked-for bereavement. Bitter were his tears over this great and irreparable loss ; but the Lord sustained him, so that he came presently to say—"the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord !" But mournful indeed must have been the tenderness, with which he clasped to his aching bosom, his two motherless little ones.

And yet, he once said—in reference to that time of his sore chastening—the two years, immediately after his loss, were the happiest he ever knew. For when his hope was removed, like a tree, when that, around which he had clung so fondly and so closely, was swept away, when he saw no more the desire of his eyes, and knew no longer the sweet converse of earlier days, it may be that his half-broken heart turned with deeper and fuller affection towards his Lord and Saviour ; in that blessed communion, which only they who have experienced it can comprehend, found more than consolation, even that joy that maketh not ashamed, and the peace which passeth all understanding—a joy and peace with

which nothing on earth can intermeddle—the joy of faith in the Crucified—of faith in the bliss to come, in the prospect of re-union with the dead in Christ, in the world beyond the grave!—the peace that rests patiently and contentedly, till in the fulness of time, the shadows pass away, the morning dawns, and the light of the eternal day shines forth in all its supernal radiance, teaching us why and wherefore we were called to endure the discipline of life!

“What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter.”

Very precious to my dear father were those solitary hours, when he was enabled to feel most sensibly the presence of his Saviour; it seemed to him, that He who had seen fit to bruise and break, came in His infinite love and compassion, to bind up and to console. He was not alone, for he had companionship that those around him knew not of; and when he wept over the grave that covered that beloved one, it seemed to him, that the all-merciful Christ, who mingled His tears with the sorrowing sisters of Bethany, wept also with him!

And she—the beloved one of his youth, the wife and dear companion of his manhood—surely it was “better far” that she should be dwelling securely in her heavenly home; snatched from the toils, and sorrows, and cares of life, and gathered to her everlasting rest. Yes! my father might well have said—

“Gone to begin a new and happier story,
Thy bitterer tale of earth now told and done;
These outer shadows, for that inner glory,
Exchanged for ever—O thrice blessed one!”

Certainly her path in life seemed fair and smooth then; she walked serenely in the pleasant sunshine, and the sorrows of the past only rendered sweeter and more appreciable the joy of the present. A loved and honoured wife, a youthful, happy mother: it *seemed* as if she were borne away from a rich and goodly heritage! But who can tell? Who in the morning can say what the noontide and evening may bring forth? Who knows whether the sunshine may not fail, and the flowers wither, and the birds cease their warbling, and the heavens gather blackness, before the day be done? God only knows: He sees the tempest

afar off, and hears the roaring of the waves, when mortal ears listen only to the woodland melody, and the rippling music of the “still waters,” so gently gliding through the flowery “green pastures.”

God houses his frail ones, ere the storm descends ; He takes them from the evil to come. “He giveth his beloved sleep ! ”

“Lottie” seems to have had some previsions of her early death ; for some little time before her illness, she said to my father, in the course of conversation :—“Samuel, dear ! if I die, love another, and in time marry again ; for I cannot bear to think of you as being alone.” And he returned :—“Dear Charlotte, do not speak of such a thing ; I feel I could not so easily forget you.” But still she urged it upon him, and still he refused to hear.

He told me once, how perfectly that poem of Longfellow’s—the “Footsteps of Angels”—described his feelings in the early days of his widowed solitude.

“And with them the being beauteous,
Who unto my youth was given,
More than all things else to love me,
And is now a saint in Heaven.

“ With a slow and noiseless footstep,
Comes that messenger divine ;
Takes the vacant chair beside me,
Lays her gentle hand in mine.

“ And she sits and gazes at me,
With those deep and tender eyes ;
Like the stars, so still and saint-like,
Looking downward from the skies.

“ Uttered not, yet comprehended,
Is the spirit’s voiceless prayer ;
Soft rebukes in blessings ended,
Breathing from her lips of air.

“ Ah ! though oft depressed and lonely,
All my fears are laid aside ;
If I but remember only,
Such as these have lived and died.”

And so he always spoke of her—calmly, though sadly—as if even on earth she were not utterly lost to him. Sometimes he used to think she could not be so very far away.

Time passed on, and again he was immersed in business ; sometimes gaining, sometimes losing ; after the natural fashion of his uncertain trade. But through every vicissitude, amid every temptation, he still maintained that spotless and high integrity, with which his name was, and now his memory is, so intimately associated !

Once, when suffering under some heavy

reverses, he spoke of them to a friend ; who bluntly replied :—“ Well ; Mr. Blott, you deserve it ! you are too scrupulously honest for this go-ahead age of competition and commercial cut-throats, that we live in. Others, by a few clever sleight-of-hand performances, make an immense amount of profit. I can find room for a conscience in a great, spacious church, but not in the close quarters of our corn-market : I cannot afford to keep up an establishment there, as I can in church, you know ! Why don't you *mix* seeds in such and such a way, &c., &c. ; that would bring you in hundreds, if judiciously managed ! ”

“ What ! ” returned my father ; “ and sear my conscience ? ” “ There you are, at it again ”—was the reply—“ what has conscience to do with business ? ”

“ *Everything !* ” replied my dear father, solemnly :—“ a clear conscience, and a soul washed in the Atoning Blood, is our only Insurance-paper against the devouring fire of the last day. Mr. —, you know I was once a poor man, and you know also the struggles and the pains I have gone through, in order to gain and to keep the position I now occupy :

but I would be a poor man again to-morrow, rather than do this great wickedness and sin against my God ! ”

“ Good-bye, Mr. Blott ! ” shouted his friend : “ if I stay any longer, you’ll convert me, and that would be hundreds out of my pocket ! ”

WORK IN THE MASTER'S VINEYARD.



"I am listening here in Rome,
And the Romans are confessing ;
English children pass in bloom,
All the prettiest made for blessing.

" ' Angli Angeli ! ' (resumed
From the old Mediæval story)
Such rose angel-hoods, emplumed
In such ringlets of pure glory !

" Ragged children with bare feet,
That the angels in white raiment
Know the names of, to repeat
When they come on you for payment.

" All these mouths we cannot feed,
Cannot clothe their ragged bodies !
Well, if man's so hard indeed,
Let them learn at least what God is ! "

" Last Poems."

CHAPTER VIII.



My father was always most kind and courteous to every one with whom he was associated ; to be thoughtful and considerate for others was his natural disposition, but towards that class from which he originally sprung, he invariably manifested the utmost benevolence, and the most delicate generosity. How many a time, when our poorer neighbours have been sick and ailing, have they come to his house for wine, dinners, and other good things, confident of receiving that which they sought : and as far as I know, never in a single instance meeting with a refusal, or an unkind repulse.

Many a poor sufferer, who has had cause to

bless God for my father's religious teaching, has also had to render grateful thanks for temporal mercies, sent to him by the same channel. My dear father was not one to say to a destitute brother or sister—"Depart in peace; be ye warmed and filled," and yet give not those things which the bodily need required. His heart was not in his purse: he *knew* that to give to the poor was to *lend to the Lord!* I have heard him say—"Take such and such a little dainty to so and so; he needs it. I have suffered from his malady, and I know how the frame hungers and craves for proper nourishment."

Then how many different classes of boys did he train: boys who had left the Sunday-school, who were careless, if not worse, and in danger of falling into evil courses! How many did his wise counsel reform! How many did his excellent and earnest teaching, under God's blessing, influence and decide for good! How many of these youths, who but for him, humanly speaking, might have run a career of shame and crime, have lived to attain a respectable position; and to be a blessing to all around them! I have stood with him by the

bedsides of those who owed to him their first serious impressions. I have heard them, with the hectic flush on the cheek, and the death-damp on their brow, blessing him for the word spoken in due season; thanking God for his ministrations, which led them to Christ; and saying how they would welcome him to heaven, when he, too, should cease from his labours, and enter into the joy of his Lord.

Ah! they have met now—they have met ere this—he and his spiritual children, whom God gave him to be his joy and his crown of rejoicing before men and angels, in the day of His appearing.

Thinking now of what my revered parent was able to compass, in every point of view, I am lost in astonishment. I need scarcely say his educational advantages were of the smallest, for he could only just write a little, and make a few figures. But his powers of calculation were almost unlimited; and without pen or paper, and purely by mental effort, he would resolve the most complicated arithmetical questions, reckoning up loads, quarters, and bushels of grain, &c., all in a minute as it were, and always with a wonderful accuracy,

as surprising as it was singular ! He must have had extraordinary powers of memory and assimilation, and I think his organ of causality was developed in a very remarkable degree.

Then, with what a rare intuition he discerned at a glance the strong or weak points of an argument : the force of certain passages, and the beauties and depths of all kinds of poetry. For myself, I needed no better critic, for when I read over to him my own compositions, he caught instantly at all that was worthy of commendation, and as quickly retouched, in a few terse, fitly chosen words, that which was faulty and needed curtailment, polish, or emendation of construction ! Had he enjoyed the advantages of a liberal education, what might he not have been ? what might he not have achieved ?

But most were his thoughts poured forth in prayer : then one saw the strong, deep workings of his soul, and one could catch some glimpse of the fervid and wondrous thoughts, that, little known to those with whom he was in daily contact, seemed to penetrate his mind, and sway the whole under-current of his inner life. Then, we who listened and joined with

him, could tell where lay the secret of all his moral greatness—"a life hidden with Christ in God."

One of his favourite authors was Dr. Cumming; especially he loved the "Apocalyptical Sketches." How often have I sat by him, in the sweet May sunset, with the rosy apple-blossoms above us, and the green turf beneath our feet, and listened to his deep mellow voice, as he read page after page from his well beloved author, till he and I seemed almost nearing the Heavenly Jerusalem, of which the book spake in words so glowing, and language so distinct! He was specially fond of that well-known, beautiful hymn, beginning—

" One sweetly solemn thought,
Comes to me o'er and o'er;
I am nearer home to-day
Than I ever was before."

And dearly he loved its closing lines, and would repeat them to us, as if he realized to the full, their deep, yet sweet solemnity :—

" Feel Thee near, when my feet
Are slipping over the brink ;
For it may be, I'm nearer home—
Nearer *now*, than I think ! "

Little thought we, how near, how very near

to him, was that "dark and unknown stream," and that shore of light and joy eternal !

Like the generality of children, we saw but little of our father ; he was so completely occupied with business transactions, that he really had but scant leisure for the home pleasures he loved so well ! On Monday, he was at his post in Mark Lane, not returning to us, till six or eight o'clock at night ; Tuesday, must find him attending the market at Hitchin ; Wednesday, at Royston ; Thursday, at Ashwell—which latter market, however, has since given up the ghost ;—Friday, London again ; and Saturday, Cambridge.

Sunday was, in one sense, scarcely a day of rest to him ; for he attended the Sunday school twice, conducted by our able Superintendent, Mr. J. R. W., and also the two services, whatever might be the weather ; and in the evening, he rode eight miles to give a cottage-lecture, often in pouring rain, or in a keen, hard frost, not returning home till nine o'clock ! Then up again next morning very early—I superintending his breakfast—that he might be off by the 6·30, or 7·0 o'clock parliamentary train ! Such a life, for thirty years, was really

enough to wear out the strongest and toughest constitution ! Certainly he had no mind to rust out, in his case the blade wore out the scabbard, long before its natural time.

Then my brothers, or I and the clerk, were frequently with him in his office till late at night, settling accounts, balancing the books, &c.; and on Saturday night, it was always twelve o'clock before the week's work was thoroughly finished and laid aside: but no stress of business would ever tempt him to infringe for one quarter of an hour, on the inviolable sacredness of the holy Sabbath-day ! He generally paid his men on Friday, so that they might do their marketings comfortably on the Saturday, nor be, as is really sometimes the case, *compelled* to go shopping on the Sunday morning, or not at all till Monday came again ! It would be well if many masters would follow his example in this particular, much Sunday trading would be thereby discouraged; the household of the poor working-man would be better managed, and his wife would at least have the opportunity of studying and practising economy to the best of her ability.

So we children had not the pleasure and

profit of our dear father's society as some have, when business claims are not so numerous, or so pressing, or perhaps do not, as a means of subsistence, exist at all. But when he was at home, he was indeed "*at home*;" and a great treat it was to us all. How we children used to refer to him all our own little matters—weighty enough to us though—concerning the disposal of our rabbits, the management of our little gardens, and the meaning and history of the large pictures in the Family Bible! And he would sit down among us, and be a child again himself, and advise with us, and tell us what we wanted to know. I used to be puzzled exceedingly, when I read in the Old Testament the chronicles of those old wars of the Jews. Why did God allow wicked people to be killed by them, when I might not kill, or even injure my little enemy, "Johnny," who was certainly wicked, as he was always throwing stones at my brothers and myself? And then my dear father, in his own clear way, and in simple language, explained to me the difference between the former dispensation, when man was directly permitted to punish man, and the present dispensation of our Lord and Saviour

Jesus Christ, under which it was our happy and unspeakable privilege to live. And he, whose mind was burdened with heavy money transactions, between whose hands thousands of pounds went and came on market-days, could sit down with us, and "be a child once more;" entering into all our baby disputes, our tiny cares, our hopes and joys and sorrows, with a patience and a sympathetic kindness, I have never seen excelled, and very rarely equalled!

When we were quite little ones, it was our supreme delight to cluster round him in the evening, when the toils of the market were over, and pretend to be fairies, while Papa on the sofa was the great, good giant, bigger and better than any of us, whom we were to sing to sleep, like the tale in the German legends! And Mamma used to tread in the ruddy fire-light, so softly, lest he should be disturbed; and when he awoke, he would pretend not to find us, and to look for us in every place where he knew we certainly were not, and then run after us, like a good-natured ogre, too kind to eat us up, whatever his natural propensities in that way might incline him to do. And we

shrieked with joy, and laughed and danced and kissed him and were kissed again and again, till everybody was tired, and were subdued once more into quietness and good order !

I remember once lying in my pretty white cot, a little rosy, happy child, and seeing him kneeling in prayer. When he rose up, he said—"Dear Julia ! to-morrow morning I am going by the early train to one of the May-meetings ; and I shall give a subscription to the Missionary Society."

"Ah ! then, Father !" I said—"it will be like what you read in the Bible yesterday morning at prayer-time : you can say to God afterwards—'of Thine own have I given Thee !' "

"My blessed child !"—he exclaimed, joyously—"it will be so, I trust : surely, O Lord, 'out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, Thou hast perfected praise.' "

At another, and much later period, I said to him—"Dear Father ! I wish you would not go out driving through these frosty nights to your village-meetings ! and then you are up again next morning, to catch the early London train ! It is killing you, father dear ! you do

too much ! If you are deacon of our church, a teacher in our Sunday school, and a preacher in the villages, there is no reason why so much labour should fall upon you ! Remember you are but mortal ; and I really think you ought not to risk a life so valuable and so precious to many, when, after all, there are others who might share your toils, and relieve you of a reasonable portion of the work : a work that is certainly too much for your strength, though not for your spirit."

" My dear daughter ! "—was his reply—" I appreciate your kind thought, and tender consideration : but I *must* work while it is called to-day : the night cometh when no man can work. We have each one of us our vineyard, which must not be left to another. I have mine, and I must not neglect it."

Sometimes he used to procure religious books, and have them beautifully bound ; and then he sent them anonymously by post, to noblemen, and other persons of high condition, who lived in our own neighbourhood and elsewhere. Always, you see, about his Master's business—always intent on doing good ! How

emphatically might he have adopted those lines of Bonar :—

“ Gladly away from this soil I would hasten,
Up to the crown that for me has been won ;
Unthought of by man, in rewards or in praises,
Only remembered by what I have done ! ”

NEW ASPIRATIONS.



"So tired, so tired, my heart and I!
It was not thus in the old time,
When he sat with me 'neath the lime,
To watch the sun-set from the sky.
'Dear love, you're looking tired,' he said;
I, smiling at him, shook my head.
'Tis now we're tired, my heart and I.

"So tired, so tired, my heart and I!
We sit beside the headstone thus;
And wish that name were carved for us.
The moss re-prints more tenderly
The hard types of the mason's knife,
As heaven's sweet life renews earth's life,
With which we're tired, my heart and I.

"Yet, who complains? my heart and I?
In this abundant earth, no doubt
Is little room for things worn out:
Disdain them, break them, throw them by!
And if before the days grew rough
We once were loved, used,—well enough,
I think, we've fared, my heart and I."

"Last Poems."

CHAPTER IX.



IN the last chapter I have rather outrun my story, for as you will perhaps have observed, I have as yet made no distinct allusion to my father's second marriage, or to his second family, of whom I was eldest-born.

After the death of his Charlotte, he spent many solitary hours, his heart sometimes very heavy and lonely, and his dim seclusion uninvaded. Then he used to sit in the long evenings, thinking of her, and of the two little babes, who did not live to call him "*father!*" Then, while the silent hours rolled on, he used to muse on the celestial kingdom, which his

dearest ones had so early inherited. And though actual words were wanting, no doubt he felt as felt that gifted poetess who wrote—

“ Whatever’s lost, it first was won ;
We will not struggle or impugn.
Perhaps the cup was broken here,
That heaven’s new wine might show more clear
I’ll praise Thee while my days go on.”

Although he enjoyed sweet and almost uninterrupted communion with his Heavenly Father, he suffered sometimes, especially as time wore on, from the loneliness of his position. His own fireside, where once he had been wont to find the fellowship of a kindred mind, where once there was always one to greet him with a smile, and to soothe away, with her gentle cares, all the irritations and petty worries, or it might be the serious anxieties of a long, toilsome business-day, was now a blank, and a mournful solitude, all the sadder for the sweet lingering memories of the past.

Perhaps, in these long hours of isolation, he remembered his dear lost wife’s injunction, to seek out for himself another partner, who would be the sharer of his joys and sorrows, and a help-meet in all his labours and solitudes ! At any rate it came to pass, that after two

years of widowhood, he began to look about him with a view to a second marriage.

He was first attracted by a lady who possessed great personal charms, and he thought of making her his wife, as she seemed suitable in every way ; but a friend of his own was also in love with this fair damsel, and determined to secure her for himself. He did not allow my father to perceive his admiration, but he hit upon a clever scheme whereby he succeeded in distancing the suitor, whose charms he greatly feared might dangerously rival his own. He took my father to visit two pretty girls residing near Cambridge ; but to neither of them did the widower seriously incline : he had fixed his mind on the handsome young lady, who was also, though unsuspected by him, the secret object of his so-called friend's most ardent aspirations.

Foiled in his endeavour to provide a substitute, this Ahithophel, thinking, I suppose, that all stratagems were lawful in love and war, bethought himself of another, and far less honourable expedient. He quietly dropped my father at his own door, and rode off to inform the lady in question, of the apparently

capricious conduct of her admirer, Mr. Blott. What he said, we know not, but he certainly succeeded in representing my father in no very favourable colours, for when next he paid her a visit, she excused herself from seeing him, and a few months afterwards was married to the false friend, whom I am always inclined to speak of as "Ahithophel." Whether Ahithophel and his bride were truly happy through life, as were my father and my own dear mother, I really do not know—but judging from anterior circumstances, I should be inclined to imagine not.

Soon afterwards, he met with a very pleasing young lady, possessed also of a considerable fortune; and to this match, he said, he could obtain the consent of all—but God! An uncle of his, a wise but worldly minded farmer, seeing how the land lay, remonstrated with him for remaining undecided on such a point, and for dreaming even of foregoing the advantages which must accrue from so desirable an alliance.

"What is the matter with Miss —— that you cannot fancy her?" said the uncle, sententiously. "Come! do not be nonsensical! there are hundreds of handsomer men than

you are, who would be only too ready to avail themselves of such a chance : such a fortune as she has too !” But some circumstance offending Miss ——, the acquaintance was broken off, by the interposition of God, as he always considered it, who would not suffer him to yield himself to one, who promised to be a stumbling-block in his course of usefulness, and a hindrance rather than a help-meet, in his spiritual course. He never declared himself ; something, as he said, always preventing him. Sometimes he rode out miles to see her, but through the providence of God came back again, without having breathed a single word of that which he came purposely to impart !

So he was delivered from this snare ; and though at the time the discipline was hard, and the trial severe, he rejoiced that he had not been left to disobey the Divine injunction : “ Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers ; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with darkness ? and what concord hath Christ with Belial ? ”

SECOND MARRIAGE, AND REVERSES.



“Backward, flow backward, O tide of years !
I am so weary of toil and of tears—
Toils without recompense, tears all in vain—
Take them and give me my childhood again.
I have grown weary of dust and decay,
Weary of flinging my soul-wreath away,
Weary of sowing for others to reap :
Rock me to sleep, Father, rock me to sleep !

“Tired of the hollow, the base, the untrue,
Father, O Father, my heart calls for you ;
Many a morning the grass hath grown green,
Blossomed and faded our faces between.
Yet with strong yearning and passionate pain,
Long I to-night for your presence again :
Come from the silence so long and so deep :
Rock me to sleep, Father, rock me to sleep.

“Father, dear Father, the years have grown long,
Since I last hushed to your lullaby song ;
Since then, and into my soul it doth seem,
Womanhood's years have been but as a dream ;
Clasped to your heart in a loving embrace,
With your light lashes just sweeping my face,
Never hereafter to wake or to weep :
Rock me to sleep, Father, rock me to sleep.”

Anonymous.

CHAPTER X.



It is written—"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies? The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no dread of spoil. She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life." And again—"A prudent wife is from the Lord."

The time came when my father was more than repaid for the sacrifice he had felt it his duty to make. Casually, as people would say, providentially, as he knew and felt it to be, he one day met, in her father's own house, a young lady, not long since returned from boarding school; and being motherless, at the head of

her surviving parent's household ! She was very young and delicate looking, and when my father first saw her, she was reading aloud to her father, in a soft, rich voice of uncommon sweetness and purity of intonation.

My father, like Shakespeare, thought—

“A sweet soft voice, an excellent thing in woman.”

And he was charmed with what he saw, as well as with what he heard, and from that hour resolved to make the fair reader his wife. Her interesting appearance, her pale, statuesque style of beauty, and her melodious accents first impressed him ; but as time passed on, he found that she possessed other qualities far more valuable and more abiding than mere loveliness, and silvery sweetness of voice.

This young lady—who was indeed afterwards my own dear mother—was of Irish descent ; and, as tradition declared, springing from a younger branch of that family which boasts of the poet, Oliver Goldsmith, among its most illustrious scions ! However that may be, I may be pardoned if I think there has always been among us a poetic fervour, and a higher caste of thought, than that which commonly prevails in families of our own rank and position.

My grandfather was at first averse to the match, and he objected to the corn-trade, as being notoriously precarious ; but in process of time he came to relent, after a severe illness, and to sanction the proposed nuptials.

They were married in two months from that time ; for my father, when he had set his mind upon any line of action, was not apt to let the grass grow under his feet while he carried out his plans. The honeymoon was spent in France ; and a happier couple, perhaps, never returned from a continental trip to settle down to daily duties, and increasing responsibilities, than my father and mother, when they found themselves in their own comfortable village-home, happy in each other's perfect confidence and unreserved affection, and in the sweet domestic charities of their tranquil, secluded life. In that pleasant home I first saw the light ; and I was christened "Julia Sarah"—the second name being, as I have mentioned, my mother's also.

Afterwards, my father bought a farm and land, where I passed a very happy, favoured childhood ; for it was my inestimable privilege

to be the daughter of a noble Christian man, and a devoted Christian woman !

Then another large field ; and an orchard was for sale, and that also, under somewhat peculiar circumstances, he was enabled to purchase and add to his estate ! Years afterwards, he said to me :—" Dear child ! how I love this old place which I have improved and beautified ! In that orchard I have set trees for others, even as these were set for me—I shall never eat of the fruit of that which I have planted, for ere long I shall partake of the fruit of the Tree of Life ! "

And now, all these places have a peculiar charm for me, associated as they are with a beloved parent's holy memory, and bearing, as it were, the hallowed impress of a truly good man's life. Still around field, and homestead, and orchard seems to me to linger the fragrance of his prayers, and of his secret communings with the Master he loved so well, and Whom, to the last, he most faithfully served !

Often was he chosen arbitrator and peace-maker between his brother corn-merchants, who highly esteemed and admired him ; for

there were few who did not love him, and still fewer who did not trust him fully, both as regarded principle and judgment. He never permitted himself to speak evil of any one.

His remarkably candid disposition was in some measure reproduced in his children; for though we had occasionally our little disagreements and ebullitions of temper, we had no secrets from one another, and certainly none from our parents. His temper was something wonderful: it was really impossible to provoke him to anger.

Once, two corn-factors laid a wager one with the other on the subject of my father's well-known equanimity, and the possibility of its being upset. One of them declared that he would put him in a passion; and he betted five pounds on the success of this laudable undertaking.

They proceeded with their scheme, when he was just settling down, tired and hungry, after a long ride, and a busy market, to discuss the merits of an excellent dinner.

One of them carried off, as in jest—a rude jest, certainly, as practical jests always are—his plate-full of meat and his knife and fork.

He only laughed and called for others ; but the order was instantly counter-manded, the waiter being in confidence, and bribed to disobey for the nonce. Then after quietly tormenting him for some time, the same person quickly and dexterously seized his chair, and took the very great liberty of laying it and him backwards on the floor. All present were amazed, my father being a powerful and courageous man.

My father quietly and gravely arose, saying —“ My dear fellows, don't do that again ! we should do as we would be done by : however—

‘ He that is down need fear no fall,
He that is low no pride ;
He that is humble, ever shall
Have God to be his guide.’ ”

“ Blott ! ” cried his persecutor, in his rough and ready way—“ Give us your hand ! you've lost me a five pound note : but I'll forgive you if you will only forgive me ! let's strike the bargain ! ”

At another time, he was placed in an equally troublesome situation, from which his fine temper and ready tact, however, extricated him, without any unpleasant results. A fine hand-

some young farmer, with whom he was well acquainted, called him into a room, at a certain inn, alleging that he was wanted there on some very particular business. There were congregated a number of gentlemen-farmers, drinking the health of their friend, who had just succeeded, by strategem, in drawing my father into the company. He had been lately married, and they were holding this little festival in his honour, toasting him and his lady in full bumpers of good wine ! With one voice they declared that Mr. Blott must give them a song ; for they had all sung in their turn, and he must perforce furnish his quota of entertainment on so auspicious an occasion. “ In fact ” —said several sturdy young farmers—“ he should not leave the room till he had acceded to their request.”

Here was a dilemma ! A minister was sitting in the “ four-wheel ” outside, waiting to drive with my father to our village, and only fancy how edified he would have been, at hearing that Christian deacon “ singing a song ” in that merry and highly excited company ! What a nice little tale for village charity ! What a nice little gossip for the frequenters of the

ale-house !—“ I say, what do you think ? why one of our oldest deacons at the chapel yonder, sat in the inn-room, at R—— the other day, and sang a song : shouldn’t wonder if it wasn’t —‘ we wont go home till morning light.’ ”

And the next positively affirming—“ Why that saint Blott, a member of a Christian church, as he calls himself, was at the inn the other day, singing—‘ We wont go home ’—had a little too much, I daresay ! ”

And the third—“ Why would you believe it, but it’s quite true : that very good Mr. Blott, that leads the prayer-meetings, actually went to the inn, at R——, the other evening, and sang—‘ We wont go home till morning light ’—and he took so much, they could hardly get him home ! ”

Imaginary sketches, certainly, but true to the life : the snowball of scandal gets bigger and blacker as it is rolled from one to the other, for who knows not how the world outside, waits for the halting of professed Christians. So much the more reason then for professors to act consistently, and to maintain great prudence and caution, even in little things !

“ It is of no use to try to get off,” said my

father's treacherous friend—"when six farmers are determined to have their will, what can you do, single-handed?"

"But, gentlemen!"—was the response—"you must excuse me; I am not a singer: moreover, I have a friend waiting for me outside!"

"Send for him, then"—cried the host, or president of these festivities, held in his own honour.

"He is a minister!"

"Oh, oh!"—returned the farmer, with a lengthened face—thinking, doubtless, that neither place nor people were quite the kind of congregation or church, over which the reverend gentleman might like to preside, even for a single evening—"oh! that alters the case!" continued he.

"Well, gentlemen!"—said my father, taking a chair—"since I must make a virtue of necessity, and sing for you, will you promise me, on your honour, to let me go as soon as I have sung my song? my friend is waiting, and I have business to transact on my return home: I wish you all a pleasant evening, but I cannot share it with you."

“We all promise!”—they cried with one accord—“although we are very sorry you must leave us so soon! but if you really *must* go directly the performance is over, &c.”

“Then I will begin at once!” and my father sang—

“There was a bee flew over the wall,
And he said buzz, buzz—and that was all.”

“No, no! Mr. Blott!”—they exclaimed—“you don’t fly away so!” But the host interposed—“Your word of honour, gentlemen! it is pledged! Mr. Blott must please himself now.”

They all laughed, though the laugh was against them, and they shook hands, and said “good-bye!”

Always he was the champion of the weak, and ready to stand up at any moment to defend the helpless, or succour the oppressed. One particular instance I shall long remember. A dear friend of ours, a clever and refined man, but withal sensitive, and perhaps a little timid by nature, came to my father one day, telling him that he was engaged to preach to a certain congregation! but he could not go—“the people were so cruel.”

I shall never forget how proudly and nobly my dear father stood up, as it were, between his meek, dispirited friend, and those unkindly Philistines of the land; and said, eloquently—
“My dear Mr. A——, it is your duty to go wherever your Master sends you: aye! to go though, as Martin Luther said at Worms, or on the road thither, were there as many devils there as tiles on the housetops! You *must* go! and what is more, I must go with you! A true Christian must ‘fear God and know no other fear!’ ”

And then he tenderly reasoned down the fears of his younger and weaker brother in the faith, and they went to the meeting, and I also, an unnoticed, but earnest auditor and spectator. My dear father gave out the hymn, prayed, and did all that he could to lighten the task of the poor sensitive, soul-tortured preacher, who sat flinching from the ordeal of the criticising and unfriendly gaze of so many curious eyes; which said eyes, I am sorry to say, belonged, in some instances, to those who called themselves Christians; though surely they had never learned, or else had quite forgotten, the divine code, by which Christians of every

class are expected to regulate their conduct. The poor man's lip quivered, and his eyes almost filled with tears, as he marked certain uncharitable gestures and demonstrations ; but the sweet, consoling hymn my father gave out before the sermon, greatly comforted and assured him ; and after all he preached excellently, to our infinite surprise, after such a reception, as well as to the involuntary admiration of his enemies. I said afterwards—" I rejoice in your success, Mr. A—— ; the Philistines will be quiet after this ; they will say—'tell it not in Gath ! ' "

He pressed my hand, and with strong emotion, thanked God that the race of Great-hearts was not yet extinct !

Ah me ! those were pleasant days ! and I cannot help lingering over them ; forgetting, perhaps, that events, which were to me of the deepest interest, cannot be to my readers of equal significance. If I tire them with trivial records, they must kindly bear with a daughter's loving devotion to the memory of a dearly loved and greatly honoured father !

How we used to enjoy our picnics in June ; sometimes going to a distant water-mill of ours

fishing, and sometimes to a pleasant spot, where, long years ago, a proud castle reared its towers and battlements against the deep blue sky—the stronghold of “time-honoured Lancaster,” the noble “John of Gaunt!” Not far from this, as tradition states, still stands the fine red-brick farmhouse where Oliver Cromwell’s mother, Elizabeth Bouchier, was born. And then, on the soft thymy turf, with wild-flowers scattered here and there in fairest, wealthiest profusion, how merry we were; and he, a very child again, among us!

Once we were enjoying a picnic amongst these meadows, which were called “John of Gaunt’s,” when we missed him for an hour or two. We were afraid he was lost, and at last we strolled into the nut-wood in search of him. Presently, a few roods off, we found him and asked, why he had served us so. He answered—“Years ago, I dedicated myself to God in this place, and here I came again to dedicate myself afresh to Him, and to His service, henceforth and for evermore! To Him who has kept me from falling; to the God of my fathers, Who has brought me so far on my heavenward way!”

It was his custom to have a harvest prayer-meeting before a sickle was put into the golden grain; and he would bring us all up in the "sociable" with our Bibles, and hymn books, and conduct the service himself, with a power, and a thrilling pathetic force and earnestness, such as I have seldom, if ever seen surpassed! Then he would treat his men to a good lunch; leave them rejoicing, and bid them farewell!

Since his death, many have spoken of this annual service, and of the good words in season, and the suitable remarks then addressed to them. Shall I ever forget the beautiful hymns we sang in chorus, under the vast and glorious dome of God's own blue sky? Or the apt illustrations he drew from fields and reapers, as he spoke of the great harvest at the end of the world, and the angel-reapers, who would come to separate the wheat from the tares; laying up the good grain in safe garner, and casting out the profitless weeds to be burned up with fire!

And he now is gathered to his home of rest and joy; ripened by God's grace, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; he has passed into that better world,

the Church of the Firstborn, the assembly of just men *made perfect* !

The farmers around said it was a singular practice : but then Mr. Blott was a singular man—and “singularly good !” some of them made answer.

I think the decline of his health really began some years before his death, on a certain 8th of August, when a terrible fire broke out, and did much damage on our premises. My father had just had his outbuildings nicely done up, and they were freshly painted, and everything was in beautiful order. Some nights previously, two other farms had been burnt to the ground, and he had been on the spot, rendering all the assistance in his power ; and only on the night preceding our own calamity, a third conflagration had taken place, at which my father was also present.

My father, weary with the toils of the previous night, had retired early, and was in a sound sleep, when he was suddenly roused by hearing two dear friends * shouting—“ Mr. Blott ! Mr. Blott ! your farm is on fire ! They awoke us, and we dressed in rooms that needed no candles, for all around us was the fiery

* The late Mr. T. S., and Mr. D. M.

glare, brighter than the light of day ; and we could hear the crackling of timber, and the crashing of beams, as we were hurried away, without our shoes, to the house of a kind friend and neighbour. I looked back—I see it now—the whole arch of heaven one blaze, and glorious beyond description ! in the background, set on a barn, was a tall white wind-mill, whirring round its broad sails, like a magnificent “ Catherine-wheel,” as the draught of the immense fire drove it on with incredible velocity. Near at hand, a very tall poplar, a spire of flame, shooting up its fiery pinnacles into the glow above, till it fell to the ground, a charred and blackened fragment of smouldering timber, and scorched up leaves and branches.

It was a grand scene, and I felt rivetted to the spot, scarcely heeding the great heat, and the thunder of falling roofs, and the general devastation spreading with lightning-rapidity through my happy, and lately peaceful home.

Eight hundred sacks of grain, ready dressed for the London market, were burnt, or otherwise damaged, and rendered unfit for use ; altogether a large amount of property was

destroyed. Happily, my father was well insured, and in process of time new buildings rose up, the blackened ruins disappeared, and all was restored that the fire had injured or consumed; but he used to say that one

“ Could not buy back, with gold,
The old associations ! ”

He never cared for the new barns and granaries, and the later buildings generally, as he had cared for those that used to stand on the same ground in other days, before the terrible visitation of “ our great fire.”

Afterwards, he was not always so bright as he had formerly been; and once, but only once, he seemed weary of his life. We were having our regular after-dinner chat, and talking of the cutting system of competition, which so completely invades all circles of commerce, in these steam-engine, electric-telegraph, go-ahead, “ never-say-die ” days ! a system, too, unavoidable, perhaps, but not the less discomfiting to quieter spirits, and older travellers on the road of life, who have had their youth’s struggles and buffetings, and long now for peace and rest; a system that often makes friends enemies, and clears away with one

flash of light, that blinds while it dazzles, the happy dreams and soberer visions that have been so pleasant and so real in earlier days !

“Yes !” said my father, looking at me tenderly, and laying his weary head on my shoulder, as if tired out, and spent with the long toil of life’s hot day—“Yes, my Julia ! the world has been very cruel to me !” It had only served him, as it serves so many others—smiled upon him in his hour of success, and looked askance and in scorn on his day of adversity. The world always cheers on its prosperous, thriving denizens ; it has little patience with unfortunate people, who are visited with what we call reverses of fortune. Truly, “men will praise thee, when thou doest well unto thyself !”

I go now to his grave as to a shrine, and think what might have been for him, and for me, and for others, had his life been prolonged ! but I cannot tell, God knew what was best—His will be done in earth, as it is in heaven !

I shall never forget the proud, happy smile on his face, as I laid my first little volume of *Poems* at his feet. All the empty plaudits of fame could never have been to me, what that

smile was, in all its full content, its pardonable paternal pride, its sweet and tender flattery! I had written impromptu on a slip of paper, these lines, which I gave to my father and mother, with my little volume, "*The May Garland* : ”

“ The proudest moment of my life,
May be when fame’s fair smile I greet ;
The happiest moment of my life,
Is when I lay this at your feet.”

HIS LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.



“ By Thy redeeming grace alone,
And not for merits of my own,
O, pardon me !

“ As thus the dying Christian prayed,
Without one gathering mist or shade
Upon his mind ;
Encircled by his family,
Watched by affection's gentle eye,
So soft and kind.

“ His soul to Him who gave it rose,
God led it to its long repose,
Its glorious rest !
Though the Christian warrior's sun has set,
Its light shall linger round us yet,
Bright, radiant, blest.”

*From the Spanish of Coplas di Manrique,
slightly altered.*

“ I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's woods ;
And the friendships old, and the early loves,
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighbourhoods.



"There are things of which I may not speak ;
 There are dreams that cannot die ;
 There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
 And bring a pallor into the cheek,
 And a mist before the eye.

* * * * *

"Strange to me now are the forms I meet,
 When I visit the dear old town ;
 But the native air is pure and sweet,
 And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,
 As they balance up and down,
 Are singing the beautiful song,
 Are sighing and whispering still :
 'A child's will is the wind's will,
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

"And Deering's woods are fresh and fair,
 And with joy that is almost pain,
 My heart goes back to wander there
 And among the dreams of the days that were,
 I find my lost youth again.
 And the strange and beautiful song,
 The groves are repeating it still :
 'A child's will is the wind's will,
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.' "

Longfellow.

CHAPTER XI.



My dear father's illness was long and wearisome: he suffered much, but he bore all bravely, as a Christian, and strong-hearted man should. For the last nine months, my dear mother and I, in turns, sat up with him every night. Ah! how patient and considerate he used to be, and how precious now is the memory of those still night-watches, when he and I seemed shut out from all the rest of the world. How fond he was of saying—

“ Seeking me, Thy worn feet hasted,
On the cross, Thy soul death tasted,
Let not all these toils be wasted ;
Jesus, Saviour! pity me!

“ Think, oh Saviour, for what reason,
Thou endured earth's spite and treason,
Nor me lose, in that dread season :
Miserere Domine! ”

Milton's poem—"On his loss of sight," was one of his especial favourites ; and Longfellow's "Sandalphon" was another. Sitting by his bedside, I used to recite them from memory ; for alas ! night was to our devoted trio, more a time of action, and more a season of anxiety than day : for by night he suffered more from the terrible martyrdom of his fatal malady—"asthma of the heart."

On the very day that I left the sofa, after a six weeks' illness, from an attack of acute rheumatism, he took to his couch, and never entirely left it again !

These were the verses, of Milton, which I recited to him so often, and which he seemed always ready to listen to, again and again :—

"I am old and blind,—
Men point at me as smitten by God's frown,
Afflicted and deserted of my kind :
Yet I am not cast down.

"I am weak, yet strong ;
I murmur not that I no longer see :—
Poor, old, and helpless, I the more belong
Father to Thee !

"Thy glorious face
Is leaning towards me, and its holy light
Shines in upon my lonely dwelling-place,
And there is no more night.

"On my bended knee
I recognize Thy purpose, clearly shown ;
My vision Thou hast dimmed, that I might see
Thyself—Thyself alone ;

"I have nought to fear,
This darkness is the shadow of Thy wing,
Beneath it, I am almost sacred : here
Can come no evil thing !

"O merciful One !
When men are farthest, then Thou art more near ;
When friends pass by me, and my weakness shun,
Thy chariot I hear.

"It is nothing now,
When Heaven is opening on my sightless eyes,
When airs from Paradise refresh my brow,
That Earth in darkness lies.

"Visions come and go—
Shapes of resplendent beauty round me throng—
From angel-lips, I seem to hear the flow
Of soft and holy song.

"Give me my lyre,
I feel the stirrings of a gift divine :
Within my bosom glows unearthly fire,
Lit by no skill of mine."

You must forgive me for any inaccuracies in these most beautiful lines—they are taken from the Oxford edition of Milton's Works—but I transcribe them from memory, the volume not being at this moment in my possession. I dare say some of your friends, kind reader, however

they may fail in the divers busy callings of life, are notwithstanding, excellent *bookkeepers*! Some of mine are ; and that is the reason why I cannot just now lay my hand on my "Milton," as I could have desired, for your benefit and my own satisfaction.

The annexed poem is "Sandalphon:" the exquisite beauty of these lines must be my excuse for inserting them in this chapter. Many times have I repeated it to my father in the long dreary night-watches.

"Have you read in the Talmud of old,
In the legends the Rabbins have told
Of the limitless realms of the air,—
Have you read it,—the marvellous story
Of Sandalphon, the Angel of Glory—
Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer?

"How erect at the outermost gates
Of the City celestial he waits,
With his feet on that ladder of light,
That, crowded with angels unnumbered,
By Jacob was seen as he slumbered
Alone in the desert at night?

"The angels of Wind and of Fire
Chant only one hymn and expire
With the song's irresistible stress ;
Expire in their rapture and wonder,
As harpstrings are broken asunder
By music they throb to express.

“ But serene in the midst of that throng,
Unmoved by the rush of that song,
With eyes unimpassioned and slow,
Among the dead angels, the deathless
Sandalphon stands listening, breathless,
To sounds that ascend from below ;—

“ From the spirits on earth that adore,
From the souls that entreat and implore
In the fervour and passion of prayer ;
From the hearts that are broken with losses,
And weary with dragging the crosses
Too heavy for mortals to bear.

“ And he gathers the prayers as he stands,
And they change into flowers in his hands,
Into garlands of purple and red ;
And beneath the great arch of the portal,
Through the streets of the City Immortal,
Is wafted the fragrance they shed.

“ It is but a legend, I know,
A fable, a phantom, a show,
Of the ancient Rabbinical lore ;
Yet the old Mediæval tradition,
The beautiful, strange superstition,
But haunts me and holds me the more.

“ When I look from my window at night,
And the welkin above me is white,
All throbbing and panting with stars,
Among them majestic is standing
Sandalphon, the angel, expanding
His pinions in nebulous bars.

“ And the legend, I feel, is a part
Of the hunger and thirst of the heart,

The frenzy and fire of the brain,
That grasps at the fruitage forbidden,
The golden pomegranates of Eden,
To quiet its fever and pain."

Not only had my dear father a fine taste for poetry, statuary, and the like, he had also the eye of a connoisseur for oil painting, as several paintings he had, testify ; amongst which, are two of Queen Anne and Queen Mary, said to be, by our artist friends, the productions of those two celebrated painters, Sir Geoffrey Kneller, and Sir Peter Lely.

The time came, when I was obliged to leave my dear father for a little while ; our kind and attentive friend, Dr. J., did not think he would pass away quite so quickly. There was business to be transacted in London : mamma could not possibly be spared ; and as my health was rapidly giving way, under the pressure of my long, painful anxiety, and the exhausting effects of continuous night-watching, it was arranged that I should go to town, attend to that which required the presence of one of the family, and return home again in a fortnight.

On the evening before my departure, my father said—"You will be sure to get your

business finished in a fortnight, and return to be my little nurse again through the winter? Your cheeks have lacked their roses sadly of late, through sitting up with me, but the change will bring them back I trust!"

In the morning, I kissed him and bade him 'good-bye;' and then I set out on my London journey. I never saw my dear, dear father again: I never shall, till I myself put off these threadbare garments of mortality, and stand face to face with him on the threshold of our Father's House.

While I was absent, he was taken suddenly worse: a two hours' struggle, and all was over! I had left the friends with whom I went to stay, because infectious illness had broken out in the house, and I dared not risk my health and strength, now so valuable to me, since I believed that all my vigour, and all my physical forces would be taxed to the utmost, in the precious, yet painful task, that awaited me on my return home! Alas! I knew not that that sweet page of my life's history was closed for ever!—my work in that hallowed chamber had ceased to be!—he needed no watches now! My letters, by rea-

son of my unexpected removal to a distant part of London, were necessarily delayed, and when I hastened back, weeping bitterly all the way, the coffin-lid concealed from my aching eyes, the face so revered, so beautiful, so inexpressibly dear ! Never, while life lasts, shall I cease to remember that morning, and the first great anguish of my irreparable loss !

Then they told me—those beloved ones who were left, who had enjoyed the blessing of watching to the last, beside that dying form—how he had looked, and what he had said, in that dread hour of nature's dissolution. Oh ! how I mourned, that I, who for nine months had scarcely left him at all, should have gone away for nine days, so that I should be far distant from that solemn scene, when Death arrived to set the sufferer free !

He told them how he saw angels in the room, waiting to bear his soul away. "I shall soon be *there*," he said, "for Gabriel is a swift angel !" Afterwards, being asked to whom he was whispering, he said—"To Jesus ! He is standing by and comforting me !"

Then, as if gazing on an actual revelation of the last enemy, he cried—"Come Death ! and

knock off life's shackles, and set me free ! Come Lord Jesus ! ” And he turned fearlessly round, as if actually looking on the visible form of the King of Terrors, and then with a happy smile on his face, as of meeting his Saviour, passed away to the realms of infinite and eternal glory !

Only once before had he been in danger of dissolution ; and that was when he fell from a ladder at the mill ; and we all drove over in terrible dismay, weeping and praying that his precious life might be spared ; and God heard our supplication, and gave him back to his sorrowing wife and children. But now—God saw that he was ripe for his heavenly inheritance ; his work on earth was done, and He called His faithful servant to his rest, and bade him enter into the joy of his Lord.

His funeral was attended by nearly all the neighbouring farmers, and the villagers. The chapel-yard was filled, and many who did not call themselves mourners, wept by the open grave. Nonconformists and Episcopalians met around that last resting-place of one whom they alike loved and honoured, one whom they deeply deplored, although their loss was his

eternal gain. They felt, that taking him all in all, it would be long before they looked on his like in God's Israel again !

His funeral sermon was preached by his dear friend and pastor, the Rev. John Harrison, from Acts viii. 2. " And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him."

And now all was over : the place that had known him so long, knew him now no more. Never again would his fine stalwart form be seen in the harvest field, or in the pastures, or amid the busy throngs of men in street or market ; never again would his full mellow voice be heard proclaiming to dying sinners the everlasting Gospel, and the riches of the Love of Him, who gave Himself for the Redemption of mankind ; no ! nevermore. He rested from his labours, and his works did follow him ; he had nobly run the race, and reached the goal ; he had fought the fight, and won the victory ; he had laid down the cross, and taken from his Master's hand the crown of glory that fadeth not away.

He had quitted earth with all its cares and pains, for heaven's own perfect joy ; and ex-

changed his clay abode, for that mansion of delight, prepared for him in the celestial city, before the foundation of the world.

And in that mansion, dear Christian friends, we leave him. And because we *can* say—"O death where is thy sting? oh grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!—let us be steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord."

"Far better they should sleep awhile,
Within the Church's shade,
Nor wake, until new Heaven new earth,
Meet for their new immortal birth,
For their abiding place be made.

"Than wander back to life, and lean
On our frail love, once more,
'T is sweet as year by year we lose
Friends out of sight, in faith to muse
How grows in Paradise our store.

"Then pass ye mourners cheerly on,
Through prayer unto the tomb,
Still, as ye watch life's falling leaf,
Gathering from every loss and grief
Hope of new spring, and endless home.

"Then cheerly to your work again,
With hearts new braced, and set

To run, untired, love's blessed race—
As meet for those, who face to face,
Over the grave their Lord have met."

Even so, O Lord Jesus, grant us grace to run with all patience, and diligence, and obedience, and with a perfect trust in Thee—"the race that is set before us!"

A little while—only a little while—for years soon glide away to the *workers* in Thy vineyard; and we too, "found in Thee," and numbered with Thine own, shall hear, each one, Thy voice, saying—"Well done! thou good and faithful servant! Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Amen.

MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS FROM FRIENDS, IN
TESTIMONY OF HIS CHRISTIAN
CHARACTER, &c.

“What shall we add now? he is dead!
And I who praise and you who blame,
With wash of words across his name,
Find suddenly declared instead,
On Sunday, eighth of August, dead!

“Which stops the whole we talked to-day.
I quickened to a plausible glance
At his large general tolerance
By common people’s narrow way,
Stopped short in praising. ‘Dead they say.’

* * * *

“Be abstinent in praise and blame,
That man’s still mortal, who stands first,
And mortal only, if last and worst.”

Last Poems.

“Down below, the church, to whose poor window
Glory by the autumnal trees is lent:
And a band of worshippers in mourning,
Missing some one at the sacrament.

Up above, the burst of hallelujahs!
And without the sacramental mist;
Spread around us like a sunlit halo—
The great vision of the face of Christ.”

Lyra Anglicana.

CHAPTER XII.

THE following letter was written from his late minister, condoling with us on our late bereavement.

Dear Mrs. Blott,

Mrs. C. and myself were greatly startled and grieved to hear a day or two ago, of the death of our dear and valued friend, Mr. Blott. I felt ready to exclaim, "Truly a great man has fallen to-day in God's Israel." I am sure you must feel his loss very cruelly, but I am sure also that you will seek to lie resigned to the Divine will. You know Who sent you this sore trial, and will try to say with your beloved Lord—"Father, Thy will be done, not as I will, but as Thou wilt!" You know, dear Mrs. Blott, how many are your consolations in the midst of such a trial as this—"You sorrow not as others who have no hope."

I knew Mr. Blott very well as you are aware, and can testify that beyond any other man I have ever known, his soul seemed full of Divine things, ever glad to think of them, and to converse about them. I remember how he told me, that when there was constant fear of fire at Bassingbourne, he felt the Saviour standing by him. We need not doubt that same Saviour was near him in the last moment of his life.

Mrs. C. and myself unite in kind love to you and your family. We trust the Almighty will deal very gently with you, and help you to look forward to a blessed re-union in heaven. Our kindest regards to all friends.

And believe me to remain,

My dear Mrs. Blott,

Faithfully yours,

Mrs. Blott.

C. C.

The next epistle that I shall lay before you, is a letter from a brother deacon, in attestation of other points in his character, which I have mentioned before in this simple memoir of his life ; this letter was written by one who knew him from his infancy, and is, as follows :—

Dear Miss Blott,

Your venerated father was a marvellous man, and a striking instance of what an individual may do by perseverance.

He possessed remarkable self-possession ; I have seen him (especially on one occasion) calm and unruffled under the most provoking circumstances, which convinced me, (and I doubt not others,) he was vastly superior by intelligence and principle to those opposed to him.

I do not know, or at least I do not recollect, at present, whether I have any of his sayings or doings, &c., by me at this time. My observation of him has been the remarkably decided change of life and conduct when he became a Christian, which he manifested unceasingly so long as I knew him.

As a Christian, he possessed many excellencies, especially a copiousness in prayer ; in this respect he was a great loss : but I trust his prayer will be abundantly answered with blessings on his family, and that all may be influenced by his example to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

With kind regards,

I am, yours sincerely,

Miss Blott.

S. H.

A simple square white pillar marks his resting place, surmounted by an urn, bearing a withered wreath, the emblem of death, and covered with the funereal “asbestos” cloth of the Greeks, emblem of immortality* ; so named,

* Erected by Messrs. Warren and Sons, Hitchin.

because when placed in the fire, it is taken out again uninjured, only whiter; and hence like the soul taken from the furnace of death, it still remains the same, indestructible, only more purified from the grosser feelings of earth. On the tomb, surrounded with low railings, is this inscription.

Sacred to the Beloved Memory
OF

SAMUEL BLOTT,

Born September 17, 1808, died August 8th, 1863,
aged Fifty-five years.

The text placed underneath is—

“For ever with the Lord.”

And this verse, the epitaph of the lovely and accomplished poetess, Mrs. Hemans, composed by herself.

“Calm on the bosom of thy God,
Fair spirit rest thee now;
E’en while with us thy footsteps trod,
His seal was on thy brow:
Dust to its narrow home beneath,
Soul to its place on high;
Those that have seen thy look in death,
No more may fear to die.”

Speaking of him, as of another saint, (Dr. Raffles,) it might be said, “There is something

irresistibly eloquent in the testimony of nearly half a century's pure and blameless life in town and country, and something that touches us all to tears, as we read of the throngs that saw him carried in his age to the last resting place, and brought reverent pilgrims to his grave, till the sunset shadows fell around that sacred spot. There is something inestimably beautiful in that serene sunset. The youth Raffles soon found a channel for his life, and pursued it carefully to the end. He lived on the sunny slopes, and anon in the quiet valleys of truth, and never cared to climb the rugged heights, where Truth puts on her grand array, and utters her profoundest mysteries. He fought no doubts, because he knew none to fight. He kept the sunny faith of life's young hour to that far distant morning when he died, with a verse of Holy Writ quivering on his pale lips. The happy child's heart was warm within him till his dying day. We may safely and calmly say with the poet—

“And now he rests—his greatness and his meekness
No more shall seem at strife :
For death has moulded into calm completeness
The story of his life !

“ Around *His* grave are quietude and beauty
And the sweet heaven above :
The fitting symbol of a life of duty
Transfigured into love ! ”

And if, standing so solemnly, dear reader, between the living and the dead, I may be allowed to say a few words at the close of this brief memoir, unfettered by the trivialities of time, as a farewell wish, it would be these from the Swedish of Bishop Tegner, so often read by me to my late dear father ; once as simply part of a book—now as part of my life. They run thus :—

“ Oh ! when the infinite burden of life descendeth upon us,
Crushes to earth our hope, and under the sod in the grave-
yard,
Then it is good to pray unto God ; for His sorrowing children
Turns He ne’er from His door ; but He heals, and helps, and
consoles them.
Yet it is better to pray when all things are prosperous round
us—
Pray in fortunate days, for life’s most beautiful fortune.”

And so may we be found heirs with Him of that glorious fortune, that has the promise of the life that now is, and of the life that is to come. Amen and Amen.





